DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 479 771 CS 511 971

TITLE	Classroom Notes Plus: A Quarterly of Teaching Ideas, 2000-2001.
INSTITUTION	National Council of Teachers of English, Urbana, IL.
ISSN	ISSN-1526-5641
PUB DATE	2001-04-00
NOTE	126p.; For Volume 17 (1999-2000 issues), see ED 477 853.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Council of Teachers of English, Notes Plus, 1111 W. Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801-1096. Tel: 800-369-6283 (Toll Free); Fax: 217-328-9645; e-mail: public_info@ncte.org; Web site: http://www.ncte.org. For full text: http://www.ncte.org/notesplus/archives/.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
JOURNAL CIT	Classroom Notes Plus; v18 n1-4 Aug 2000-Apr 2001
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Class Activities; *Classroom Techniques; *Educational Resources; Elementary Secondary Education; *English Instruction; Instructional Effectiveness; Instructional Innovation; *Language Arts; Learning Activities; Media Literacy; Multicultural Education; *Teacher Developed Materials; *Writing Instruction
IDENTIFIERS	Harlem Renaissance; Holocaust; National Council of Teachers of English

ABSTRACT

This 18th volume of "Classroom Notes Plus" contains descriptions of original, unpublished teaching practices, or adapted ideas. Under the Ideas from the Classroom section, the August 2000 issue contains the following materials: "The Thought Pot" (Andrew R. West); "Seeing Is Reading: 'The Hollow Men'" (James Penha); "Language Lessons for Critical Thinking" (Joe Taylor); "Exploring Gender Assumptions in Language" (Terry Martin); "Ten Things You Should Know About..." (Sherri S. Hall); and "Classroom Consumers Report" (Stacy Doolin). Under the Focus on the Harlem Renaissance section is: "Be-Bop-Bo-Duh: Writing Jazz Poetry" (Aurelai Lucia Henriquez). Under the Teacher Talk section are: "Exploring the Harlem Renaissance"; "Do You Ask High School Students to Read Aloud?"; and "Emergency Measures for Ugly Classrooms." Under the Traci's Lists of Ten section is: "Ten Prewriting Exercises for Personal Narratives" (Traci Gardner). Under the Classroom Solutions are: "Clothesline Display"; "Tabloid Vocabulary"; and "Stage Fright." Under the Focus on Literary Terms section is: "Figurative Language." Contains Web resources and notes. Under the Ideas from the Classroom section, the October 2000 issue contains the following materials: "The Granddaughter Project" (Kay Hinkebein); "Putting Rock and Roll into Writing" (Cecelia A. Murphy); "Getting the Move On: Revision in the Computer Lab" (Jim Lonergan and Donna-Marie Stupple); "Writing Checklist: An Easy Way to Review Grammar" (Pamela J. Orth); and "Their Day to 'Howl': Ginsberg Brings Out the Poetic Best in Middle School Students" (Alfree Enciso). Under the Teacher Talk section are: "How Do You Help Students Recognize Style and Voice?"; and "Suggestions for Working with Students with Disabilities." Under the Classroom Solutions section are: "Custodians and Keys"; and "Late-Work Tickets." Under the Focus on Multicultural Education

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

section is: "Deepening the Meaning of Heritage Months." Under the Traci's Lists of Ten section is: "Ten Ways to Play with Literature" (Traci Gardner). Contains Web resources and notes. Under the Ideas from the Classroom section, the January 2001 issue contains the following materials: "Blithering Titles" (Sue Torsberg); "Combating Stage Fright" (Linda S. Beath); "Literacy Club" (Tory Babcock); "Practicing Practical Reading" (Frances B. Carter); "Family Stories" (Rose Reissman); "Not Just for Elementary Students" (Tracy Felan); and "A Teacher Shares the Meaning of Martin Luther King Jr. Day with Her Students" (Jessyca Pearson Yucas). Under the Focus on Multicultural Education section is: "How We Are White" (Gary Howard). Under the Focus on Teaching about the Holocaust section are: "Always Remember, Never Forget"; "Silent Warm-Up" (Robin Wolcott); "Correspondence in a Concentration Camp" (Don Leibold); "A Hiding Place" (Victoria Lewis); and "Confronting Prejudice and Genocide: Using Symbols and Stories in Holocaust Education" (Nancy D. Kersell). Under the Teacher Talk section are: "Clarifying Goals for Teaching the Holocaust"; "Suggestions for Nonfiction Related to the Holocaust"; "Alternatives for Students Who Are Not Allowed to Watch 'Schindler's List'"; and "Staying Refreshed." Under the Classroom Solutions section is: "Showing Who We Are through a Class Quilt." Contains Web resources and notes. Under the Ideas from the Classroom section in the April 2001 issue are the following materials: "Finding Stories in Paintings" (Doris Brewton); "Language as Visual Aid: Using the Classroom Walls Differently" (Chad A. Donohue); "Connecting Songs and Stories" (Terri Fisher-Reed); "Imitating the British Romantic Poets" (Michael T. Duni); "Paste-Pot Poetry" (Mary Ann Yedinak); and "Dead Poet Interviews" (Colette Marie Bennett). Under the Focus on Multicultural Education section is: "A Moral Choice." Under the Focus on Media Literacy section are: "What Is Media Literacy?" (Andrew Garrison); "Turning the Camera on the Class" (Alice Cross); "Center for Media Literacy"; "Barry's Bulletin--A Resource for Media Educators"; "Web Sites on Media Literacy and Advertising"; and "Online Resources on Media Literacy." Under the Teacher Talks section are: "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"; "How Do You Stay Refreshed?"; Webfolios; and "Teaching Film and Media." Under the Traci's Lists of Ten" section is: "Ten Television Analysis Writing Projects" (Traci Gardner). Under the Web Resources section are" "April Is Poetry Month"; "Student Web Publishing Resources"; and "Using the Web for High School Student Writers." Under the Previews section are: "After Viewing: Reflections on Responding to Films in the Classroom" (Bill Martin); and "Viewing the Films: Not 'Whether of Not,' but 'How'?" (William McCauley). Under Classroom Solutions is: "A Grading Tip." Contains notes and an index for the 2000-2001 year. (NKA)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 479 771

Classroom Notes Plus: A Quarterly of Teaching Ideas, 2000-2001

Classroom Notes Plus v18 n1-4 Aug 2000-Apr 2001

National Council of Teachers of English

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

☐ Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

M. Myers

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

CS 511 971

Learning
is a treasure
that will follow
its owner
everywhere.

—Chinese proverb

Watch for additional Tips *throughout this issue!*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Ideas from the Classroom

The Thought Pot—Andrew R. West 2
Seeing Is Reading: "The Hollow Men"—James Penha 3
Language Lessons for Critical Thinking—Joe Taylor 5
Exploring Gender Assumptions in Language—Terry Martin 6
Ten Things You Should Know About . . . —Sherri S. Hall 7
Classroom Consumers Report—Stacey Doolin 8

Focus on the Harlem Renaissance

Be-Bop-Bo-Duh: Writing Jazz Poetry
—Aurelia Lucia Henriquez 8

Teacher Talk

Exploring the Harlem Renaissance 12
Do You Ask High School Students to Read Aloud? 16
Emergency Measures for Ugly Classrooms 24

Traci's Lists of Ten

Ten Prewriting Exercises for Personal Narratives
—Traci Gardner 19

Classroom Solutions

Clothesline Display 2
Tabloid Vocabulary 6
Stage Fright 25

Focus on Literary Terms

Figurative Language 29

Web Resources

Online Screenplays 7
Student Publishing Site 10
Harlem Renaissance Web Sites 15
Teachers First Site 19
Online Interviews with Authors 21

Notes 30

Copyright © 2000 by the National Council of Teachers of English. All rights reserved.

IDEAS FROM THE CLASSROOM

A new school year is upon us, and with it come new opportunities and new challenges. This issue of *CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS* is packed with teaching suggestions and practical strategies to help you expand and enhance student learning.

Among the innovative activities recommended in this issue, we include a special themed section, "Focus on the Harlem Renaissance," which offers a variety of suggested strategies and resources to help you introduce your students to the writers and artists of the Harlem Renaissance.

We hope to make the themed "Focus" section an occasional feature in *CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS*, and in each feature to offer a mix of practical tips, recommended resources, and in-depth lesson plans. Potential mini-themes might address a wide range of topics, such as Contemporary Issues; Film and Media; Language Study and Grammar; Teaching English as a Second Language; Mythology; Working with Parents; Poetry; Research Papers; Shakespeare; Technology and the Internet; Wordplay and Vocabulary; and literature themes such as African American Literature; Asian American Literature; Literature of the Holocaust; Hispanic/Latino Literature; Native American Literature; War Literature; Women Authors; World Literature; and Young Adult Literature.

If you think of a particular topic you'd like to see addressed, please let us know. And if you'd like to submit teaching ideas or tips on any of the above topics for consideration, contact Felice Kaufmann, NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801-1096; fkaufmann@ncte.org; 217-278-3648 (direct line).

The Thought Pot

This idea must be attributed to my father, who taught English for 31 years at Indian High School in Cincinnati, and dreamed up this idea in the late 1960s.

The Thought Pot is a receptacle for creative original and even unoriginal writing. It is an anonymous forum, and once a week (usually on Fridays), without prereading, I remove the lid of the Thought Pot and read aloud whatever has been submitted. The receptacle I use is is a collage-covered potato chip tin, but any size receptacle will work.

I allow jokes, poems, creative character descriptions, complaints, criticism (literary and otherwise), song lyrics, interesting observations, and just about anything under the sun. However, I make clear that students are not allowed to say anything that would "offend my mother" (and she's easily offended!) or make any other students feel bad about themselves. I also don't allow Internet humor, as the volume could so easily get out of hand.

I use one Thought Pot for all four of my literature classes. Here are the procedures we follow:

Procedure

1. Students select a pen name—which *must* be kept secret (not an inside joke with friends!). They should use this pen name for the entire semester or year.

2. Students are encouraged to create an entire persona with their pen name—and the submissions should add to this persona. This can include accent, tone, or usual concerns addressed each week. If they wish, students may create and use more than one persona, and hence more than one pen name, at a time.

3. Students and teacher can submit all week. All submissions must be in before school on Friday (and students shouldn't wait until their class period to put their stuff into the Pot).

4. Teacher randomly pulls out submissions and reads them aloud, withholding sensitive or offensive material if necessary (though after a proper introduction to the Thought Pot concept, this shouldn't be a problem).

5. Teacher saves all creative submissions in case a student wants something back. At the end of the semester or year, pen names are revealed in the last Thought Pot. (They never believe my pen names—"That was you, Mr. West!?")

The Thought Pot does take time—usually 15-20 minutes every Friday or every other Friday. And the teacher needs to

▶

Classroom Solutions

Clothesline Display

I saw a clever way to display things recently. The teacher hung a clothesline across one of her walls (she used self-stick hooks to hold up the ends of the line) and hung things with tiny clip clothespins. She had more things hung from the ceiling on another clothesline. She was displaying student work, but I imagine posters could be hung in this way too. (One possible source for a thin clothesline and tiny clothespins is the Lillian Vernon catalog.)

Karen McGill
WAKEUPMAN@aol.com

carry the weight at first, to get the Thought Pot going. After that, it takes at least a few creative students who are willing to continue to submit material. There will always be a few submissions, or passages, that are inappropriate for reading aloud, and the teacher must be careful to read a few lines ahead to watch for this.

However, the many benefits of the Thought Pot outweigh the time and effort.

Benefits

1. Writing! Students write creatively.

2. Students love the anticipation, the anonymity, the variety of material, and the mystery surrounding pen names. They grow quite protective about the Thought Pot.

3. The Thought Pot provides an outlet for honest student feedback on class activities and reading material.

4. The teacher has the option of using the Thought Pot as another avenue for introducing new poems and new authors to students. I usually add a poem or two that we weren't able to get to in class.

5. The Thought Pot is so popular that it gives the teacher leverage with students—"We won't have time for the Thought Pot unless you all work hard and do well generating your thesis ideas."

6. The Thought Pot offers an outlet for fresh writing and original humor, and generates a sense of community among teacher and students.

Andrew R. West, Turpin High School,
Cincinnati, Ohio

Seeing Is Reading: "The Hollow Men"

Over the years I have struggled with what is simultaneously the goal and the flaw of the classroom analysis of poetry: our using words to discuss how a poem works when, in fact, any words we use in our discussions and writing can only be inferior to those employed by good poets in their poems. This conundrum strikes me as most troublesome in dealing with poetic imagery, especially in those poems which are built on their images as surely as some films are constructed with montage.

As Victor Bowman writes in the instructor's manual for *THE RIVERSIDE ANTHOLOGY OF LITERATURE*, a favorite text of mine when I taught university-level literature, "Students will tend to see images as passive elements of poetry that merely reinforce or emphasize meaning rather than as central building blocks of poems that can actively create and control meaning" (Houghton Mifflin, 1991: 437).

In the same volume, Douglas Hunt suggests that with a poem like "The Hollow Men," teachers should therefore encourage students to interpret a series of images in the manner of the great explicator Helen Gardner (245). Hunt is right about the approach, but I still worry if students' "interpretations" of Eliot's images remain only verbal translations, mere shadows of shadows. Visual images need to be seen, not just talked or written about.

Thus when I returned some eight years ago to secondary school teaching, at a high school where "The Hollow Men" was part of the junior-year curriculum, I adapted Hunt's

▶

Look for more on the *CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS* Web site!

Visit the *CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS* Web site at www.ncte.org/notesplus for these new resources:

- "Misery Is Fun: Using Langston Hughes's *Black Misery*" by Ilise Benun—This article outlines how to use Hughes's book *BLACK MISERY* as a starting point for personal reflection and writing. Reprinted from *SING THE SUN UP: CREATIVE WRITING IDEAS FROM AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE* (Teachers & Writers Collaborative, 1998). Visit the Web site at http://www.www.twc.org.
- Harlem Renaissance Web Sites—This list, appearing also on pages 15–16 of this issue, suggests valuable sites for exploring the writers and artists of the Harlem Renaissance.
- "A Quick Tour of World Wide Web Sites for English Teachers"—Thom Prentice put together this annotated list of Web sites for the Fall/Winter 1999 issue of *ENGLISH IN TEXAS*, the journal of the Texas Council of Teachers of English.

Also look for Teacher Talk archives, Articles of Interest, a Poetry Page, Web Resources, and links to Rationales for Challenged Books. And at http://www.ncte.org/censorship, you'll find advice and updates on censorship, plus a form for reporting censorship incidents.

Reflections on Practice: Let Us All Pause. . .

by Karen McGregor

True life is lived when tiny changes occur.
—Leo Tolstoy

I imagine a world without reflective people, a world where people lack the passion necessary to better themselves, to better the human race. I could not abide such a world; without reflection and desire, stagnation and complacency challenge the productive seeds of change. Yet, as a teacher, I know all too well that such seeds are threatened by the treadmill of chaotic days and hurried nights. There is, sadly, little space to pause, to ponder, to make crucial and constant revisions to our personal and professional lives.

We must continue to actively seek and create this space—to muse, to sit quietly in retrospection, to collaborate on future projects. Indeed, we must demand this space, rather than acquiescing to conditions that too often require our energies to be placed elsewhere.

We must continually ask ourselves what our purpose as educators is. We cannot achieve our purpose without a time and place to reflect on our practice. It is through reflection that we grow personally and professionally; if we are unable to grow, our children will surely suffer the results.

Just as we ask our students to consider revising their ideas or words when writing and working on projects, we too must remain open to revising our pedagogical practices and beliefs. Writer Bernard Malamud said, "I work with language. I love the flowers of afterthought" (as quoted in Murray 1990, 184). If we educators continually rethink and revise, the flowers of our reflective thought will be witnessed through life-giving change in our professional practices, in our students and, ultimately, in society.

We cannot achieve our purpose
without a time and place to reflect on our practice.

Reprinted from the Summer 1999 issue of* ALBERTA ENGLISH, *the journal of the English Language Arts Council of the Alberta Teachers Association (Volume 37, Number 2.)

pedagogical approach rather more pictorially. Even before a first reading of the poem, I divide "The Hollow Men" so that each student is responsible for a different segment of the poem, from the title through the epigraph until the final whimper.

The homework assignment was this: Illustrate your assigned lines on one letter-size page. The original lines must appear on the illustrated page as well. Also prepare a brief (less than one page long) analysis of how the lines fit into the poem's form and content.

It may seem bizarre to ask a student to deal with a "multifoliate rose" when she doesn't understand the whole of the work in which that rose is planted, but with a good poem—and "The Hollow Men" is a great one—we should trust the power of the poet's images. Let rational understanding follow.

The correct first step is to encourage each student's sensory experience with imagery. The student is hardly on her own here; she has T.S. Eliot as her mentor. Hunt writes that the poem "is so filled with images of futility that one could start anywhere" (244). So be it.

The written part of the assignment is designed to remind students that there is a whole as well as a part, but it is the illustration that really matters here. Students may opt to draw or to create collages in completing it.

The next steps in this process will not startle any experienced teacher. We post all the graphics on a wall or bulletin board and thus produce a storyboard of "The Hollow Men." For our first oral reading of the poem, each student declaims her piece of the poem.

Subsequently I ask the students, in order, to explain why and how they pictorialized Eliot's lines as they did. I purposely ask students not to read their written assignments, but rather to talk us through the poem extemporaneously.

▶

Hunt discovered that college students' written interpretations of Eliot's images "may lead to some irresponsible speculation, but will give [the teacher] a good chance to guide their reading of Eliot" (244). So too in this exercise. But I have found that the illustrations of the images are only rarely irresponsible because the students have not been asked to search for epiphanies or deeper meanings, but to see what Eliot wants them to see.

We are all guided by Eliot's poem. Certainly, we sometimes struggle, as discussions ensue, to see how the speaker of the poem moves from one image to another. But that struggle to know the mind of the speaker is what reading the poem is all about.

The product at the end of our experience with "The Hollow Men" is always a photocopied booklet of the storyboard and sometimes revised versions of the written analyses.

James Penha, Jakarta International School, Jakarta, Indonesia

Language Lessons for Critical Thinking

The following lessons were generated in response to our reading of George Orwell's essay "Politics and the English Language"—a wonderful essay by itself or as supplement to *1984*. In this essay, Orwell encourages writers of prose not to use words that evoke an automatic, unthinking response (a signal reaction) on the part of the reader because "words of this kind are all too often used in a consciously dishonest way."

Lesson #1
The "Good-Word, Bad-Word" Game

This exercise encourages students to guard against using signal reactions to words and to employ critical thinking skills in order to carefully analyze a writer's choice of words.

Activity: As the teacher slowly reads a list of words and phrases, students should stand if they form a positive connotation with a word/phrase. They should immediately sit if they form a negative connotation.

Examples of word possibilities: *liberal, conservative, Nazi, Facist, Marxist, trickle-down economics, left-wing, right-wing, bureaucrat, feminazi, welfare, assistance to the poor, national defense, military aid, foreign aid, tax increase, revenue enhance, user fees, receipts strengthening, firing/downsizing, dump, resource development park, sewage sludge, bio solids, organic biomass, murderers, guerrillas, freedom fighters, terrorists, killing, unlawful arbitrary deprivation of life, plane crash, controlled flights into terrain.*

Lesson #2
Responding to Signal Reaction Statements

This exercise encourages students to identify signal response statements and to respond to them with careful analysis and reflection.

Activity: Working in pairs, each student creates three signal response statements. These statements are then exchanged and the partner responds to each statement with a symbol reaction (the intended meaning of the passage).

For example:

> (Reaction Statement) Only a *liberal* would come up with a way for us to pay higher taxes in this town.
>
> (Symbol Response) Before deciding on the mayor's proposal to raise taxes to build a new recreation center, we need to consider the costs of renovating the old one.

Here are some other suggestions that encourage students to think critically and examine language:

- Analysis of Slogans

  Give students these guidelines:

  By their very nature, slogans are designed to short-circuit thought and to cause us to respond with reaction statements. Your mission: Make a list of 10 advertising slogans and answer the following questions for each: what thought are we being asked to short-circuit? What is the appropriate symbol response?

- Creating a Word Bank

  Draw a circle on the chalkboard or a sheet of poster paper. On the outside of the circle, write a non-specific word that students tend to overuse in their writing. On the inside of the circle, students "deposit" words that are more descriptive or concrete in nature.

  For example, the teacher might write the word "say" on the outside of the circle, and the students might respond by "depositing" words such as the following on the inside of the circle:

  bellow
  cheer
  whisper
  mumble
  proclaim
  announce

  You can also write overused adjectives such as *good, bad, unclear,* and *big* on the outside of the circle, and ask students to write more specific, less used words on the inside—perhaps such words as *sincere, dishonest, distorted,* and *spacious.*

  Encourage students to continue depositing these words into their "word banks" throughout the year and to "withdraw" specific descriptive words whenever they are needed in their own writing.

Joe Taylor, Perryville High School, Perryville, Maryland

Exploring Gender Assumptions in Language

Much has been written about the differences between male and female conversational styles. I've extended that discussion with my students by using Muriel Rukeyser's poem "Myth" (*Breaking Open*, Random House, 1973) to reveal how assumptions about gender are actually built into our language. In this poem, Rukeyser speaks to the generic usage of 'man' to represent people of both sexes:

> *Myth*
>
> Long afterward, Oedipus, old and blinded, walked the roads. He smelled a familiar smell. It was the Sphinx. Oedipus said, "I want to ask one question. Why didn't I recognize my mother?" "You gave the wrong answer," said the Sphinx. "But that was what made everything possible," said Oedipus. "No," she said. "When I asked, What walks on four legs in the morning, two at noon, and three in the evening, you answered, Man. You didn't say anything about woman." "When you say Man," said Oedipus, "you include women too. Everyone knows that." She said, "That's what you think."

©1978 Muriel Rukeyser

This wry poem focuses on the injustice inherent in language by offering a new explanation for the legendary "blindness" of Oedipus, the tragic Greek figure. By playing with language, Rukeyser demonstrates how the careless use of words might alter the course of history by leading a famous male hero to drastic consequences.

In her revised version of the myth, an old, blinded, defeated Oedipus returns to the Sphinx, and asks her to tell him why things went wrong. "Why didn't I recognize my mother?" he asks, and the Sphinx replies that he had created his destiny by giving an incorrect answer to the legendary riddle she had posed to him ("What walks on four legs in the morning, two at noon, and three in the evening?")

"You answered Man. You didn't say anything about woman," she tells him, admonishingly. Oedipus responds defensively, claiming that "When you say Man you include women too. Everyone knows that," a classic example of the "male-is-norm" argument. Reading this, one can visualize the smile on her face when the Sphinx responds, "That's what you think."

After reading this poem, responses of students in your class are likely to range from clear understanding of the poem and its meaning to "Who is this Oedipus guy, anyway?" A brief summation of the Oedipus myth might be in order to address the reactions of those who don't have a clue. Ask students why they think the author chose to invoke a legendary figure, rather than a modern figure, to make her point about the power of exclusionary language.

Discuss the title of the piece, and help students to discover its multiple meanings. What are the three myths in the poem? Rukeyser's poem itself is a new myth which employs a traditional legendary Greek myth to destroy the myth of the acceptability of using the word 'man' generically to represent both sexes. Might Rukeyser also be suggesting by her title that the use of generic male pronouns ever working *against* men is a myth? The irony of turning the exclusionary principle upside down is the strength of the poem.

CLASSROOM SOLUTIONS

Tabloid Vocabulary

I am a student teacher and about to do my first mini-lesson. I am really excited (and nervous) about it, but I want to ensure that I motivate and excite my students. My cooperating teacher would like me to work with vocabulary. I was wondering what ideas might be out there to make vocabulary fun and meaningful for my students.

Vickie Zavadsky
VJZ5C@hscmail.mcc.virginia.edu

This reminds me of something I have done. It goes like this. Purchase a tabloid and photocopy an interesting article that is appropriate for the classroom. Locate some words that you would like students to know (10–20, depending on the time available and the number of students), put these words on the overhead, and then ask students to look up and define these words. Students can work individually or in pairs. Then with their copies of the tabloid and highlighter in hand, students find and read the words in context.

Patricia Edmondson
patricia.edmondson@angelfire.com

Note the unusual structure and shape of this poem, which consists largely of dialogue. Rukeyser uses a non-traditional structure to re-tell a traditional legend in a non-traditional manner. The piece is rich with possibilities for discussing tone and irony.

Do words reflect attitudes? If so, by changing words do we change attitudes? In her classic article, "The Politics of Talking in Groups: How to Win the Game *and* Change the Rules" (*MS.*, 1981), Gloria Steinem claims that it has been critical for women to change certain words themselves in order to be recognized in public dialogue at all: "We did not feel included (and usage studies showed that factually, we were not) in hundreds of such supposedly generic terms as 'mankind' and 'he,' 'manpower' and 'statesman'" she writes (43).

Ask students to provide examples of linguistic presump-

▶

tions of maleness that they have encountered and to share the emotional responses these experiences have induced (Anger? Frustration? Humiliation? A sense of injustice?). It might also be interesting for students to talk about what the linguistic presumption of maleness has in common with other cultural assumptions, such as "whiteness" and "heterosexuality" as norms. Some are likely to see as these as non-issues, and such responses as overreactions, so an interesting discussion may result.

In their book *WORDS AND WOMEN* (HarperCollins, 1991), Miller and Swift explore the issue of how assumptions about gender are actually built into our language. Ask students to consider the following quotations from that book:

> "The use of *man* to include both women and men may be grammatically 'correct,' but it is constantly in conflict with the more common use of *man* as distinguished from *woman*. This ambiguity renders *man* virtually unusable in what was once its generic sense—a sense all-too-accurately illustrated in Tennyson's line, 'Woman is the lesser man'" (20).
>
> "Those who have grown up with a language that tells them they are at the same time men and not men are faced with ambivalence—not about their sex, but about their status as human beings. For the question "Who is man?" it seems, is a political one, and the very ambiguity of the word makes it a useful tool for those who have a stake in maintaining the status quo" (38).

Building on one or both of these quotes, Rukeyser's poem, and other sources, ask students to develop a paper on the gender assumptions implicit in our language.

Clearly, our patterns of speaking—and of being spoken about—carry deep-seated cultural assumptions about who we are. These pieces provide a good starting point for students to begin examining gender and language as a rich facet of English language arts study.

Terry Martin, Central Washington University, Ellensburg, Washington

Online Screenplays

Check out this Web site I just found today: www.script-o-rama.com

Over 600 screenplays to read online and download, if you can spare the ink and paper. Good stuff. Anything and everything you would ever need to investigate about films. This is very cool. I spent my entire lunch hour browsing through titles and discussions.

Peggy Smith
dj611@cleveland.Freenet.edu

Ten Things You Should Know About . . .

This is an activity I do on the first day of school with my 7th graders. It can easily be adapted to other grade levels. This writing allows me to quickly see how well my students can follow directions and write complete sentences. I learn something about them and they learn about me. Plus, it gets us writing right away!

I place the following list on the overhead projector:

10 Things You Should Know About Mrs. Hall

1. She likes pro football.
2. She likes to cook, but hates to clean up.
3. She lives in West Virginia and doesn't like West Virginia jokes.
4. She isn't from around here and isn't related to anyone you know.
5. She likes to read and write.
6. She expects you to read and write.
7. She believe honesty and fairness are important.
8. She tells jokes that some people don't get.
9. She is very organized.
10. She believes that there isn't much that chocolate won't help.

I then ask students to write a similar title at the top of a sheet of paper. I explain that students will now be writing lists about themselves. So that our lists will all be composed in the same format, I ask students to help me point out things about the format of the list:

- It's a list, not a paragraph.
- It's written in third person, using "she" or "he" and not "I."
- It's written in complete sentences.
- It includes likes and dislikes; it includes a little humor; it's information for the public and doesn't include any secrets.

Next, students write their own lists. After we share them in class and get to know each other a little better in the process, I collect the lists and place them in a file folder as a book about our class.

Sherri S. Hall, Shadyside High School, Shadyside, Ohio

Classroom Consumers Report

Here's a great way for students to become more aware as consumers while they practice research, writing, and evaluation skills. Students choose a product, set standards for it, and gather information, much the way *CONSUMER REPORTS* magazine does. Then students draft a consumer report and share it with the class. This provides an effective way to focus on informative writing in conjunction with a unit on advertising and persuasion.

We begin this project by reviewing articles and product reviews in the *CONSUMER REPORTS* magazine. Students may also bring in and discuss reviews of products from other magazines they read, such as computer magazines, car magazines, and so on. We talk about how products are rated, the types of tests used, the language used in reviewing products, and the ways products are ranked and described in product reviews.

Then students form small groups and pursue their own product testing, following an outline of steps such as the following:

Creating a Consumer Report

1. In pairs or small groups, decide what two or three products you will compare (for example, jeans, shoes, ballpoint pens, toothbrushes, cereal, cologne, nail polish, skateboards, etc.)

2. Set reasonable standards for the product. Choose four main standards on which to evaluate the product. Depending on the product, standards might include such elements as cost, taste, aroma, ease of use, comfort, visual appeal, etc.

3. Obtain products and gather information, using such methods as taste tests, usage tests, opinion polls, etc. Feel free to enlist friends, family members, teachers, etc. to provide feedback, and keep careful track of their responses.

4. Based on your feedback, draft the report. Recommended length is about 300 words. Depending on the product you choose, your target audience might be children, teenagers, adults, or some other group. Keep your target audience in mind as you write.

5. Create at least one chart or graph that helps to show your results. Also include at least one image (drawing, photo, etc.) of your product.

6. Include direct quotes from people who have used the product. There should be at least one quote from an "expert"—someone who has had extensive experience with products of this nature. If the product is a toothbrush, for example, you might talk to a dentist; if the product is a running shoe, you might talk to a track coach or a member of the school track team who wears running shoes a lot and has tried different types.

7. Remember, consumer reports are based on facts and testing. Present all the pertinent facts, but don't give your opinions or tell the reader what to choose—leave the decision up to the reader!

For several days, product testing takes place inside and outside the classroom, and students work together on their drafts and on creating professional looking graphs and charts.

After the reports are finished, we spend several days presenting them to the class and then produce them in our magazine: *CLASSROOM CONSUMERS REPORT*.

Stacey Doolin, Murray Middle School,
St. Augustine, Florida

FOCUS ON THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

In this special themed feature, we include a variety of resources and suggestions to help you introduce your students to the writers and artists of the Harlem Renaissance.

Be-Bop-Bo-Duh
Writing Jazz Poetry

by Aurelia Lucia Henriquez

Booker T. Washington, the powerful and influential African American "Wizard of Tuskegee," once said, "The first thing to do is to get into every school, private, public, or otherwise, Negro literature and history. We aren't trying to displace other literature, but trying to acquaint all children with Negro history and literature."

Throughout high school and college, it had been my desire to incorporate the history and literature of all peoples into the school curriculum. Being of Native American and Latino heritage, I know the importance of one's cultural history. My grandmother always said, "Our stories are our only true source of the history of our people. Our words are the heart of our people. The youth of today must learn all of these stories in our own words, and then maybe they'll be able to understand the Native way."

Very early in life, I began to see "our stories" as mirror images of interpersonal relations within society. More importantly, I understood why my grandmother often acquainted young people with a cherished piece of pottery, a handmade

▶

Tips

A Multicultural Curriculum for Middle Schoolers: The Perspective of the Harlem Renaissance

Look for the December 1999 issue of *MultiCultural Review* and you'll find a valuable resource for exploring the Harlem Renaissance with middle schoolers—a unit designed for eighth-graders which addresses curriculum goals and explores cultural diversity using a Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE) curriculum model (Chalmers, 1993).

The authors, Amy Otis-Wilborn, Darrell Terrell, Catherine Hnat, Linda L. Lemmen, and Malvice Jefferson, describe their project this way:

"DBAE is a conceptual approach to teaching art that emphasizes the arts as a vehicle for understanding and valuing cultural diversity. The primary goal of DBAE is to develop students' abilities to understand and appreciate the visual arts. However, the connection between the arts and culture makes the integration of the arts with other areas of study a natural means for multicultural education (Chalmers, 1993). In eighth grade, the social studies curriculum focuses on twentieth-century American history. We analyzed the content covering this period to identify themes that would help to refocus our study on issues and events impogtant to African American middle school students. Topics were identified for each decade. For the 1920s, we chose to focus our study on the Harlem Renaissance.

This artistic flowering offered an important perspective on the economic, political, and social events of the decade as a whole, including the issues of race relations and nativism, Jim Crow in the South, and the Great Migration to the cities of the North. Furthermore, the Harlem Renaissance provided an opportunity to emphasize the intellectual and artistic communities in Harlem that significantly influenced literary, scientific, and artistic endeavors worldwide. Finally, this period demonstrated the power of the arts to reinforce and pass on cultural values, to create an awareness of social issues, and to bring about social change."

MultiCultural Review is published quarterly by GP Subscription Publications, an imprint of Greenwood Publishing Group, 88 Post Rd. W., P.O. Box 5007, Westport, Connecticut 06881-5007. The individual subscription rate is $29.95. Visit the Web site at http://mcreview.com.

wedding basket, or a religious ritual. Our literature has the power to create and recreate, again and again, the most important cultural values and therefore the history of the group that produced it.

Recently I had the opportunity to teach a course called "One Country, Many Cultures" for the Brentwood School District in Long Island, New York, a district whose student population is an exquisite prismatic sunbow of cultures and races. The course encompassed literature from the Harlem Renaissance era, Latino heritage, and Native American cultures. My aim was to use poetry to go as deeply as possible into these cultures. My students ranged from eleven to fourteen years old. (I also used some of the same lessons with my regular third grade class.)

In this unit, I tried to show my students a connection between poetry and music. Many of my older students were very much aware of the strong presence of poetry in rap music, but I also wanted them to see and hear music—jazz, in particular—in poetry. My approach involved my students in language that embodies the sounds of everyday life and of music: the language of onomatopoeia.

We began with the Jazz Era. The class devoted approximately two weeks to becoming familiar with this period. Together we read books such as *The First Book of Jazz* by Langston Hughes and *Jazz: My Music, My People* by Morgan Monceaux, two resources I've found to be excellent for both my older and younger students. In the foreword to *Jazz: My Music, My People*, Wynton Marsalis wrote, "They say that in order to know the real meaning of a thing you must go back to the beginning," words of wisdom I emphasized to my students. And so we read and talked about the birth of jazz. I wanted my students to understand that jazz grew out of the beating of African drums (the basic rhythm instrument) and that jazz began with individuals playing for fun, in the South. I also wanted them to become familiar with various jazz instruments.

As a first step toward this, we reread Hughes's discussion

▶

of jazz instruments. Then the class created a semantic map based on jazz music. I simply wrote the word *JAZZ* in a large rectangle on the chalkboard. The students drew arrows from the box, at the ends of which they wrote the names and drew pictures of the jazz instruments they had read about. (The words became the next week's spelling work.) The students enjoyed making the map. Of course some of them were already quite familiar with the instruments, which they played in band or music class. Others were able to offer information about the jazz instruments used in salsa and merengue (bongos, claves, guiros, calabashes, maracas, etc.) Prior to this lesson, I had gathered many musical instruments, which I now displayed at the front of the room. The students and I demonstrated how each instrument is played.

To begin the writing part, I wrote the word *onomatopoeia* on the board and read it aloud. My students loved saying this word. They found it very amusing. I said, "If you think that saying this strange word is fun, just wait until you begin writing some onomatopoeic words." I explained that onomatopoeic words are those that imitate sounds. To clarify, I had various students come to the board. When I said the name of a thing, they had to write down the sound it makes. I told them to think of it as a game.

When I said "gun," the student wrote *bang*. And so it went, with *water/splash, bee/buzz, train/choo choo, snake/hiss*,etc. The game was not only fun; it gave students a better feel for the concept at hand. For me, it was interesting to see how students responded to and interpreted the sounds of various nouns.

Now that the students had learned about jazz and onomatopoeia, they were ready to see examples of jazz poetry. We had delved into the poems of Langston Hughes many times before, but this time I wanted them to see him in a new light, as jazz poet, so I selected poems that illustrated him as a "composer" as well as a writer. Some of the students favorite jazz poems of his were "Children's Rhymes," "Juke Box Love Song," "Ladies' Boogie," "Life Is Fine," "Dream Boogie," and "Jam Session." However, our all-time favorite was his "Song for a Banjo Dance." Some students felt that it needed to be set to music, but others argued that it didn't need any music, because it created its own!

Finally, before we began to write, I provided an example of a poem that clearly uses onomatopoeia, "Black Dance" by Luis Pales Matos:

Black Dance

Calabó[1] and bamboo,
Bamboo and calabó.
The great Cocoroco[2] says: tu-cu-tu
The great Cocoroca[3] says: to-co-tó
It is the iron sun that burns in Timbuctu.
It is the Black dance of Fernando Poo.
The pig in the mud squeals: pru-pru-pru.
The toad in the pond dreams: cro-cro-cró.
Calabó and bamboo,
Bamboo and calabó.

The junjunes[4] break out in a furious ú.
The gongos[5] quiver with a profound ó.
It's the Black race that is undulating
with the rhythm of the mariyandá.[6]

The botucos[7] already arrive at the fiesta.
Dancing and dancing the Negress gives in
Calabó and bamboo,
Bamboo and calabó.

The great Cocoroco says: tu-cu-tu.
The great Cocoroca says: to-co-tó.

Red-islands pass, islands of shoeblack:
Haiti, Martinique, Congo, Camaroon;
The papiamento[8] Antilles of rum
and the patois islands of the volcano,
which in the grave sound
of song give in.

Calabó and bamboo,
Bamboo and calabó.
It is the iron sun that burns in Timbuctu.
It is the Black dance of Fernando Poo.
The African soul that is vibrating
in the thick rhythm of mariyandá.

Calabó and bamboo,
Bamboo and calabó.
The great Cocoroco says: tu-cu-tu
The great Cocoroca says: to-co-tó.

Student Publishing Site

WWW.highwired.net is a great place for students to publish. There are many things available at this site. They even host student newspapers. All free.

Jane Blystone
blystonencinter.net

---

[1] African wood for drums
[2] Main African tribal chief
[3] Cocoroco's wife
[4] Rudimentary violins
[5] Drums
[6] Black dance in Puerto Rico
[7] Minor chieftains
[8] Caribbean dialect of Curaçao

I presented the poem in English, as I found it, in Maria Teresa Babin's book *Borinquen*, because the onomatopoeia comes through quite clearly. I felt that Matos had to be included in our exploration of African American poetry because, of all Puerto Rican poets, he is the most famous for celebrating the African heritage in Puerto Rico. The students enjoyed the onomatopoeic sounds in his poem. My younger students especially enjoyed dramatizing this poem and imitating its sounds. Many students saw that Matos's use of onomatopoeia helped to provide a verbal picture of the Puerto Rican landscape. We also talked about how Matos's poem expressed the joy and power of blacks in Puerto Rico, whereas many of Hughes's poems celebrating blackness had the cloud of American racism hanging over them.

At this point the students were quite enthusiastic about writing their own poems using onomatopoeic words. I turned off the lights and told the students to put their heads down, eyes closed. When the room was silent, I said that we were about to travel backward in time to see "Satchmo" Louis Armstrong live! I raised the volume on my compact disk player and played his versions of "Cabaret," "Do You Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans," "Someday," and "Hello, Dolly."

I was elated to see my students' hands and feet begin tapping and their heads bobbing, as they began singing the refrains. I knew it was the time to write. Here are some examples of what the students wrote:

(Piano) Ting, Tin, Tang!
(Sax) Tow, Tow, Tum!
(Trumpet) Braw, Brum, Brah, Brum!
(Drum) Tee, Tee, Tah, Tah, Tee!
(Singer) Skee-dee-daddle-doodle-dee-dah-dah-dop!
—*Amanda Carlo*

I was listening to a jazz band and I heard the trumpet player play:

BRUNH
BRUNH
BRUNH
BARAM

I was watching a jazz band and I heard the banjo players play:

TING
PING
PLINK
PLUNK

And I heard a smooth cat scattin a tune:

BE-BOP-BO-DUH-DO-DO-LOW-DO
DUH-DO-DUH-DO-DO-DODDLE-DEE!

I was watching and listening to all the people saying:
YEAH!
YEAH!
YES!
YEAH!
JAZZ!
—*Alicia Casieri*

At a BIG BAND STREET PARADE
Louie played his SINGING GOLDEN TRUMPET:
BRAHN-BAA-BA-BAUNN!
Yeah, his cats played a MEAN DEEP BASS:
HUMM-BUM-BA-BUM-HUMM !
And a BAD DRUM: DOOM-BAM-BOOM!
All the young second liners just DANCIN down the street
In a BIG BAND PARADE!
—*Yesenia Portillo*

Afterward, I grouped students in response teams. They read their poems aloud in these peer groups, with special attention to the onomatopoeic words, and, using suggestions from their classmates, revised their poems. Then they checked for spelling and punctuation.

In the words of Morgan Monceaux, "Jazz is an oral tradition—it's like storytelling. One person hears something and passes it on." I wanted to continue this oral tradition. Just as Buddy Bolden influenced Louis Armstrong and through him Dizzy Gillespie and Miles Davis, we as teachers have the chance to be future-makers or future-breakers.

Through us, our students see where they've been and take on the confidence to know where they're going. My intention was to imbue my students with the spirit and challenge of the music of the jazz era and the poetry of the Harlem Renaissance. Most importantly, I wanted to stimulate them to write with pleasure and creativity.

Bibliography

Babin, Maria Teresa. *Borinquen*. New York: Knopf, 1974.

Hughes, Langston. *The First Book of Jazz*. New York: Franklin Watts, 1955.

__________. *Selected Poems*. New York: Random House, 1959.

Monceaux, Morgan. *Jazz: My Music, My People*. New York: Knopf, 1994.

Reprinted with permission from SING THE SUN UP: CREATIVE WRITING IDEAS FROM AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE, *edited by Lorenzo Thomas. (Teachers & Writers Collaborative, 1998). To order this book, call Teachers & Writers Collaborative toll-free at 888-266-5789.*

The Teachers & Writers Collaborative is a nonprofit organization that brings writers and educators together in collaborations that explore the connections between writing and reading literature and that generate new ideas and materials. T&W publishes a bimonthly magazine and books; for more information, visit the Web site at http://www.twc.org.

TEACHER TALK

Exploring the Harlem Renaissance

I am about to start an in-depth study of Langston Hughes with my seniors, and I was wondering if anyone has Web site information about the Harlem Renaissance. Many thanks.

Lisa St. John
Lily83165@aol.com

Can anyone tell me of a website that deals with the Harlem Renaissance and/or with using jazz in the classroom? Also, does anyone have any ideas or lesson plans that focus on these topics?

Lisa Snyder
snyder_lm@hotmail.com

I wrote a curriculum unit on this subject, and if you'd like to peruse it for your own teaching, please visit the Web site listed below. Select 1997 Volume V, The Blues Impulse, and then select "The Blues Impulse in Drama: Lessons on Racial Pain."

http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1997

My article deals with teaching racial pain and prejudice through literature that is written with a "blues impulse." Some of the pieces I've included are Albee's *Death of Bessie Smith*, Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and Baldwin's *Blues for Mister Charlie*. I have also added other bits on studying the Depression through New Deal WPA art, and have an extensive list of blues music as well.

I teach a unit each year on the blues and students just eat it up. I am particularly interested in the links between blues, rock 'n roll, R&B, and rap, and continue to seek good ways to teach the links in my classes. I have used poetry by Sterling Brown and Langston Hughes and have shown the movies "Leadbelly" and "Crossroads," and have met with great success in helping students become aware of what blues is and what it does for people.

Paul Turtola
paul.turtola@yale.edu

Assuming your unit covers the 1920s and 30s, I would suggest the following artists and/or songs (more or less in order of musical development):

- Ragtime—There are some Scott Joplin "recordings" available (actually piano rolls he made, and the player piano is operated by people who know his music intimately)—"Maple Leaf Rag."
- Stride Piano— James P. Johnson (any song) (if you can't find a James P. Johnson recording, Fats Waller, Meade Lux Lewis, Champion Jack Dupree, or Pete Johnson would suffice, though their boogie-woogie is of a later period.)
- New Orleans Jazz—King Oliver (w/Louis Armstrong on coronet) (any song, but "The Saints Go Marching In" is the best known); Mamie Smith—"Crazy Blues" (the first big blues hit, 1921); Bessie Smith—"St. Louis Blues" (written by W.C. Handy, "The Father of the Blues," it features Louis Armstrong on coronet) and "T'ain't Nobody's Business If I Do"; Louis Armstrong—"West End Blues"; Billie Holiday—"Mean to Me" and "Strange Fruit."

Two themes will emerge: 1) the recurring motif of violence against the singer (female) which segues into the larger image of violence by lynching in "Strange Fruit" and 2) the increasing use of sevenths, ninths as well as the "flatted" or "blue" note that creates a sense of "sophistication" in Billie Holiday as opposed to the earthy tone of Bessie Smith/Louis Armstrong.

Kevin Collins
kevin.collins@rscs.net

The following resources on Jazz and the Harlem Renaissance may be of interest to you.

I'll Make Me a World
http://www.pbs.org/immaw/

From the makers of "Eyes on the Prize," the six-hour PBS documentary series "I'll Make Me a World" showcases the depth and breadth of black creative achievement by profiling many of the musicians, writers, visual artists, actors, filmmakers, dancers and others whose distinctive talents shaped American culture in the 20th century.

At the companion Web site, journey through 100 years of African American art and culture. Access a database of the artists featured in the television program, view video clips, download classroom materials and trace a chronology of African American art and protest.

In addition, the following links may provide some useful information.

The Mississippi River of Song
http://www.pbs.org/riverofsong/index.html

Jass, Jasz, and all that Jazz
http://www.pbs.org/riverofsong/music/e2-mo-jazz.html

▶

The Harlem Renaissance (University of Colorado)
http://www.cc.colorado.edu/Dept/EN/Courses/EN370/EN3707117Garcia/

Encarta Online Schoolhouse: The Harlem Renaissance
http://www.encarta.com/schoolhouse/Harlem/harlem.asp

Harlem: Mecca of the New Negro
http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/harlem/

The Harlem Renaissance (University of Southern California)
http://www.usc.edu/Library/Ref/Ethnic/harlem.html

Black Arts Movement
http://www.umich.edu/~eng499/

International Encyclopedia of Dance — Dance Theater of Harlem
http://www.oup-usa.org/acadref/harlem.html

Dance Theatre of Harlem: Cuesheet for Students
http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/cuesheet/dance.html

Glenn P. Greenway
glenng@buffnet.net

If you have *Adventures in Literature* don't teach Jean Toomer's *Cane*. You will completely lose the context of the work. In fact it will be reduced to a commentary on aesthetics instead of a commentary on miscegenation and race relations in the deep South.

If you're looking for an anthology, consider *The Portable Harlem Renaissance*.

James Weldon Johnson's *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* is the story of a very light complexioned biracial boy trying to come to terms with his racial identity. In some ways it is a hero's quest story with a very cynical end. He travels to Harlem, the South, Europe, back to the South, and finally settles in the East, marrying a white woman and passing for white.

The notion of "passing" for white is a very prevalent theme in Harlem Renaissance literature. Hurston deals with this rather subtly in her work. Nella Larson wrote two novels that deal with this rather overtly: *Quicksand* and *Passing*.

Langston Hughes, a biracial writer, also deals with this topic in some of his poetry and short stories, such as "*Who's Passing for Who?*"

One last thing to consider: Check out some critical essays on Harlem Renaissance writers by Prof. Houston Baker, Jr. Two books worth looking into are *Singers of Daybreak* and one comparing (or rather contextualizing) the Harlem Renaissance with Modernism.

Dale Allender
NCTE Associate Executive Director for Secondary
dallender@ncte.org

▶

NEXUS: The Harlem Renaissance

Who are we, really? Do we invent our own personalities, or are we shaped by our surroundings? Is the world's opinion of us a mirror that we groom in front of everyday, adjusting our behavior and appearance until society seems to smile at us? If so, what happens to people who are treated as second-class citizens, people who are sent to the back of the bus?

How much does heritage determine who we are? If heritage is an important part of identity, what happens to a people who have been forcibly uprooted from their homeland and history?

These are the questions that begin "Songs of the Seventh Son," one of many thoughtful articles in the Harlem Renaissance issue of *Nexus*, the interdisciplinary publication produced by Pallas Communications.

Each volume of *Nexus* is a hybrid of a well-written interdisciplinary textbook and a lively, attractive magazine; each explores the literature, history, art, music, and science of a period in relation to one or more literary works.

For more information as well as excerpts from the Harlem Renaissance volume of *Nexus*, visit www.nexusbooks.org. You'll also find out what teachers who use *Nexus* have to say about it.

Nexus is available exclusively in class sets of 25 copies or more. Each class set includes free interdisciplinary teacher guidelines and excellent support materials. The price of a class set is $162.50 (add $6.50 for each additional copy) plus 10 percent shipping.

Order forms are available on the *Nexus* Web site at www.nexusbooks.org, or write to *Nexus*, Pallas Communications, 5017 Archmere Ave., Cleveland, OH 44144-4006. Tel: 216-661-6548; fax: 216-661-6548.

I ordered two CultureShock videos from the educational division of the Public Broadcasting Service. The videos I would recommend are

1. *The Devil's Music: 1920 Jazz* (60 minutes)—very cool. My American Lit class just finished the Harlem Renaissance and we're moving into *The Great Gatsby*, and the video is perfect. (Depending upon your school's culture, there may be a few suggestive scenes.)

2. *Born to Trouble: Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (90 minutes) (all about racism and censorship, and excellent)

Call this PBS telephone number for more information on these videos: 800-424-7963.

Kate Mura

I've used this site when teaching Hughes' poetry in my Arts and Humanities class:

http://www.poets.org/LIT/poet/lhughfst.htm

G. Whitaker
whitakeg@mercer.k12.ky.us

Bryan Carter here at the University of Missouri–Columbia is working on a truly amazing Virtual Reality representation of Harlem during the Renaissance. To really experience it you must visit the Virtual Environment Instructional Lab (VEIL) here at MU. But Bryan has an interesting web site that gives you some idea with some QuickTime movies, etc. from the project. To view it go to:

http://www.atc.missouri.edu/vr/harlem/main.html

There's an e-mail link there for Bryan if you want more information. It's an enthralling experience to visit VEIL if you're anywhere nearby.

Patricia Watson
c477760@showme.missouri.edu

There is a lesson on this topic at the rock and roll hall of fame site. Langston Hughes and the Blues is listed under lesson plans on this page: http://www.rockhall.com/programs/plans.asp

Stacie Valdez
Stacie@feist.com

Be sure to try using jazz and blues with Harlem Renaissance. Also, look into the work of Romare Bearden, an African American artist. The Metropolitan Museum of Art recently published a book called *The Block*. It's thin, like a children's book, and has an intro by Bill Cosby. The illustrations are all collages by Bearden and they focus on life on the block (or in the 'hood).

Some of the Civil Rights era poetry fits well here too. (Jaci Early, Gwendolyn Brooks' "Ballad of Birmingham Jail" and "The Mother," etc.) Lots of great comparisons to life today, too. Then you could get into some good rap, too. Students could illustrate a book or create a video based on poetry and music. I've done similar projects very successfully with 11th graders. It's one of their favorite units.

Katherine Steinbring
KLSTNBRNG@aol.com

▶

A scene from "Cora Unashamed," the film version of a Langston Hughes short story that will premier on PBS later this year.

American Collection Web Site

The ExxonMobil Masterpiece Theatre American Collection Web Site was created in partnership with NCTE, and centers on the PBS Series which debuted this year.

Langston Hughes' short story "Cora Unashamed" is one of the works in the series, and material presented on this site includes a biography and essay on Hughes; author links; the full text of the story; teacher resources and lesson plans; a variety of Web links related to Langston Hughes and the Harlem Renaissance; production information on how "Cora Unashamed" was made into a movie; photographs from the film version; and a writer's workshop area.

http://www.ncteamericancollection.org/cora.htm

It's not a web site, but a good starting point would be Walter Dean Myers's wonderful poem *Harlem* (*Harlem: A Poem*. Scholastic Press, 1997)

It's an incredibly evocative celebration of the world of the Harlem Renaissance, filled with allusions to key figure whom you could spend the unit exploring: Hughes, Cullen, Duke Ellington, Cab Callaway, Lady Day, etc. It's published as a children's book (with wonderful art by Myers' son Christopher), but I've used it successfully with advanced high school students. There's also a cassette available of the rapper Puff Daddy reading the poem, which has helped hook some students on the poem.

Jonathan M. Barz
crfbarzjm@crf.cuis.edu

Harlem Renaissance Web Sites

Here's a list of Web sites offering a variety of resources related to writers and artists of the Harlem Renaissance. (See the *Classroom Notes Plus* Web page at www.ncte.org/notesplus for a version of this list with live links.)

- The Web site of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, situated at the New York Public Library, hosts an online exhibition titled "Harlem 1900–1940: An African American Community," which includes a timeline, teacher resources, and a searchable database

  http://web.nypl.org/research/sc/sc.html

- This research and reference guide by Paul P. Reuben includes links to many personalities and a chronology of important events and publications.

  http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap9/9intro.html

- This page on the Chicago Public Library site provides a list of general works on the period, followed by a list of literary anthologies.

  http://www.chipublib.org/001hwlc/litlists/harlemren.html

- The Academy of American Poets Web site allows readers to search for information on a variety of poets. Entering the name of Langston Hughes, for example, brings up a photo and brief bio, links to eleven poems, a selected bibliography, and links to other sites.

  http://www.poets.org/poets

- This page by Jill Diesman includes poetry, prose, and images by Harlem Renaissance writers and artists, in addi

▶

A Book Worth Checking Out

Wall, Cheryl A. Women of the Harlem Renaissance. *Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana Univ. Press, 1995. 256 pp. ISBN 0-253-32908-6, $29.95 (cl); 0-253-20980-3, $14.95 (pb).*

If we thought Cheryl Wall's new book would give us an encyclopedic view of all the women who were well known during the Harlem Renaissance, most broadly dated from 1920 to 1934, we were wrong. Instead, she has done better. Wall provides a richly layered discussion of the intersection of three states of being: black, woman, writer. Issues of marginality and cultural dualism are implicit in all three conditions, and Wall gives close readings to the major works.

Almost the entire book is devoted to the most prominent women novelists of the period: Jessie Redmon Fauset, Nella Larsen, and Zora Neale Hurston. Their "day jobs" were for Fauset, writer and editor at *The Crisis;* for Larsen, librarian, society wife, and nurse; and for Hurston, anthropologist specializing in folklore and sometime college instructor.

Wall examines the work of these women as they proceeded on the journey of their lives, as they moved from socially imposed roles of "Perfect Lady or Exotic Other," in Larsen's phrase, toward self definition. Hurston has Janie in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* conclude, from her travels, "Two things everybody's got tuh do fuh theyselves. They got tuh go tuh God, and they got tuh find out about livin' fuh theyselves." This encapsulates Hurston's interests in spirituality, folklore, the role of women in society, and self creation.

Although the focus is on three writers, women performers such as Josephine Baker, Ida Cox, Alberta Hunter, Ma Rainey, and Bessie Smith are included. They too were women of the Harlem Renaissance, and Wall analyzes their songs alongside the written works.

Among other writers mentioned are Gwendolyn Bennett, Marita Bonner, Georgia Douglas Johnson, and Anne Spencer. An illuminating feminist study, *Women of the Harlem Renaissance* is highly recommended for general readers, students, and scholars.

Betty Kaplan Gubert
New York, New York

Reprinted from *MultiCultural Review* (June, 1996).

tion to a resource guide to selected women writers of the Harlem Renaissance and and an invitation to join an online discussion group about the Harlem Renaissance.

http://www.nku.edu/~diesmanj/harlem.html

- The Blues Foundation page includes a "Blues in the Schools" link that offers details on what a school blues program is and why you would want to start one; it also lists an e-mail address to write to for a copy of a resource booklet of contact names and programs already in place.

  http://www.blues.org

- This page on the Teaching Matters site divides links into lessons, and includes such headings as the 1920s Experience; African American Pamphlets Home Page; Black Experience in America; the Great Migration; and Harlem 1900–1940: An African American Community.

  http://www.tminet.org/harlem.html

- On the PBS Web site, visit the Online Newshour page for February 1998 to read varied responses to such questions as How did the Harlem Renaissance affect the politics leading up to the Civil Rights Movement? and Why did the Harlem Renaissance end?

  http://www.pbs.org/newshour/forum/february98/harlem5.html

Visit this Langston Hughes page for a list of articles and sites related to Langston Hughes.

http://ucl.broward.cc.fl.us/writers/hughes.htm

- This page, titled "Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale New Haven Teachers Institute 1978–1997," organizes units in volumes by year. Subject matter, intended grade levels, and quality of lesson plans vary, but much of the material is appropriate for middle school and high school students, and several volumes include units related to the Harlem Renaissance.

  http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/

From the 1978 list, select Volume II, 20th Century Afro-American Culture, to find a unit titled "Harlem Renaissance: Pivotal Period in the Development in the Development of Afro-American Culture," by Caroline Jackson. This unit, for instance, includes a descriptive narrative, a sequence of lessons for a 9-week unit for high school students, a student reading list, and a bibliography for teachers.

From the 1988 list, select Volume II, Immigrants and the American Identity, to find a unit titled "The Harlem Renaissance: Black Artistic Traditions," by Patricia Flynn.

From the 1997 list, select Volume V, "The Blues Impulse," to find units titled:

"They Lived in Music—Blues Women Sang Their Song," by Charlene Andrade

"The Visual Blues of Jacobs Lawrence, Aaron Douglas, and Romare Bearden" by Val-Jean Belton

"Creating Blues: An Interdisciplinary Study" by Medria Blue

"The Blues Impulse—An Era and the Ambiguity of Adolescence" by Sequella H. Coleman

TEACHER TALK

Do You Ask High School Students to Read Aloud?

I absolutely believe that one way to encourage and reinforce fluency and comprehension is through speaking and listening to language/literature, but in high school classes, I rarely do the traditional, round robin thing. Here are a few things I do:

I start the year by giving students a short piece of "nonsense"—a bunch of fragments and words strung together by strange and inconsistent punctuation. They divide into groups, and it is each group's job to collect whatever props they might need, and to turn the "nonsense" into a short performance complete with characters and a short plot line. They all look at me like I'm crazy (which I may be) but by the end of the hour, we laugh and laugh as each group performs incredibly diverse, usually very humorous renditions that (SURPRISE!) make "sense." This is their first experience in my class of making meaning through oral performance.

Later in the year, I take one of the more obscure e e. cummings poems, like "grasshopper" (or there is another great one about two respectable ladies giggling at church at a beauteous man), and they work as small groups to develop a performance of the poem that somehow makes "sense."

These poems work great, because even the most fluent readers initially struggle to make "sound sense," and they must work together to ascribe meaning to the fragments and invented "words."

The meaning that comes through in their final performances are often amazing, and often different for every group, giving rise to great discussions about reader response. It also makes them curious about what a "word" is, and how words came to have rather consistent meanings.

Something to try with less-fluent reader-out-louders whose

▶

nervousness may be contributing to their lack of fluency—have them read a short passages out loud into a tape recorder. Then, have them read the passage silently, then discuss it with a partner. Have them go back to their recording, listen to it, and try to figure out where their reading doesn't match the meaning of the passage.

Then, have them work with their partner to read and record it again.

Maja Wilson
WILSONMA@hesp.net

As a second year teacher, I am still figuring out what works and what doesn't for my students. I teach in a California high school that is struggling to get off the "at risk" designation of many standardized tests, especially in language arts. The language at home for many of my students is Spanish.

I think that reading aloud is invaluable. At the beginning of each semester, I get on my soapbox and state that I believe that one of my jobs as an English teacher is to help my students become more proficient readers, and that this includes reading out loud in my class. Reading is a learning process, and it includes making mistakes—we don't learn otherwise. I also make it clear that anyone who laughs at or makes fun of another student for stumbling over a word or mispronouncing a word deals with me, and that experience will not be pleasant.

Taking my stand immediately really seems to lessen the tension about reading out loud in my classroom. Where else are my students going to have a safe forum to practice their reading skills?

Guidelines:

Each student gets one opportunity to "pass" on reading per class period. Surprisingly, few choose to do so. We play "popcorn" a great deal: I begin reading and I define the amount that each person must read (one paragraph, one page, etc.) I then say "popcorn" and a student's (usually a more willing reader to start) name. That student reads and then calls on another student. A student may pass once. Everyone must read before we repeat readers. We pause every couple of readers to check understanding, vocabulary, etc.

What I've noticed is that my students will now volunteer to read, that some of my more struggling readers jump to read a passage, and that they help each other with words that they do not know, or can't pronounce, as they read.

Kathy H.
KHarm9240@aol.com

I use these ideas for teaching future teachers how to do read-alouds, but there is no reason they can't be used in the regular classroom. So here goes:

1. Have a purpose for reading aloud. One suggestion is to link up with a group of young children in an elementary school or day care and plan to read aloud to them. Other purposes would involve performing for the class or a larger group. Plays and poetry lend themselves well to this. We could talk about ideas for these another time, if anyone is interested.

2. Elicit from the students those qualities which make for an effective read-aloud, based on the idea that reading aloud is a performance. The list would probably include: rehearsal, voice projection, voice modulation, careful pronunciation, appropriate display of emotion, bringing the characters to life, maintaining good eye contact with the audience.

3. Have the students select something they will be reading aloud. Have them take it home to practice and/or let them practice in school. If you let them practice in school, you will need to find a space large enough for them to spread out such as outdoors, auditorium, cafeteria.

4. Have the students break into small groups to perform their read-alouds. Students who serve as the audience become peer evaluators using this scoring guide I developed (see sample below) or one that you design yourself. ▶

Read-Aloud Peer Evaluation

How well do you think the reader did? Indicate your rankings by circling the appropriate numbers.

a. How well rehearsed did the read-aloud appear to be?
(poorly rehearsed) 1 2 3 4 5 (well-rehearsed)

b. How was the voice projection of the reader?
(too soft) 1 2 3 4 5 (appropriate volume)

c. How was the voice modulation?
(monotone) 1 2 3 4 5 (varied & interesting)

d. How much expression did the reader portray?
(little or none) 1 2 3 4 5 (good appropriate expression)

e. How well did the reader bring the characters to life?
(not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (believable characterizations)

f. To what extent did the reader maintain eye contact with the audience?
(little or none) 1 2 3 4 5 (good eye contact)

Comments that will help reader to improve:

5. If possible—and this is what I do with my education students—have the presentations videotaped, then have the students take home their own videotapes along with the filled-out peer evaluations, review their own performances and write a self-evaluation report, using the scoring guide categories.

6. Go through the process again, using a different read-aloud and focusing the second self-evaluation report on improvement over the first (i.e., what did you try to do to make the second read-aloud better than the first, and how well did you succeed?).

7. Do the thing that was the purpose for learning to read aloud in the first place.

Howard Miller
MiddleDoc@aol.com

OK. I know I'll probably be making some people mad, but here again is my two cents worth that I feel is worth a million bucks to my students. Its intent is to make you think about how you use reading aloud and its purpose.

Hearing every kid read and making them PERFORM are two different things that we need to be careful of. When you have a student read out loud how can you know that he/she is understanding what they read? All you can be sure of is that they know how to decode, but that is not comprehending text.

I have students who constantly stumble over words when they read aloud, and many would dismiss them as "poor readers." I want to stress again that this is because it is a performance and not a measure of their meaning and comprehension capabilities. These students are so worried about how they sound that no meaning is being made.

It is not because they don't know how to make meaning from text; it is because of the job asked of them. When they are allowed time to read it alone and then I ask them questions about what they have read, I can asses their comprehension levels. We need to be very careful of the difference between the two when teaching our students.

Yes, reading aloud does help with reading fluency which does help with reading abilities that leads to faster reading and comprehension. However, there are ways that this can be accomplished that take away the stress factor many lower

Tips

Express Yourself in Color

Throughout the country, our schools are awash in blue or black ink. I wondered if the freedom of choice could speak to the imagination of my students and help their creative juices flow. With the beginning of the new school year, I decided to experiment.

After the initial introductions, the get-to-know you activities, and a few writing assignments just to see where we were as writers, I gave my eighth graders a peculiar homework assignment: "Bring your favorite pen or pencil to class—something special."

Eyebrows were raised; I had piqued their interest. After a class discussion, the students qualified the word "special" to mean biggest, smallest, silliest, just plain fun, or one to which we had an emotional attachment. The next day, I was amazed to discover that no one had forgotten their homework, and I was a little daunted by the variety of students' choices.

When they were asked to write about their favorite pens and pencils, no one had writer's block. There were smiles and offers of "read this and see what you think!" We made a new rule: anyone could write with anything they wanted to, as long as the result was readable. We experimented and found that on white paper, yellow and some shades of melon simply don't work, so they became our exceptions.

I let students revel in their freedom of choice for a few weeks. Finally, I asked them to write about why it was so special to choose their own writing utensils. As always, I was amazed at their insights as writers.

One student commented, "Using your own pen in your choice of color makes you feel comfortable with what you are writing." Many students said that different colors helped them express different thoughts. Another student said that when writers use different colored ink, "it brings out their style." One student went to the trouble of listing vibrant colors that would help you express happiness as well as a list of dull colors to express sadness or discouragement.

As students' writing ability matures and they develop their own style, the implements they use will be less important. In the meantime, they love to explore the possibilities and stretch their creativity. I feel this is an opportunity I can't afford to miss.

Susan Rae, Southside Middle School,
Florence, South Carolina

level readers have. If they are to read out loud they should be given the opportunity to read it over first and, if possible, practice it before reading it to the class. There are many good exercises using choral readings, echoing, and repetition that can be done to help increase fluency.

Do you ever read anything to your students cold? I don't think so. So why do you make them do it?

My stand on literacy where reading is concerned is that I want them to be better comprehenders of text and to be able to express what they have read in their own words including their perceptions, emotions, and feelings whether it be in oral or written form. Reading aloud is not a goal, but a result of their progress in fluency.

Mary Weber
BUTTERCUP002@aol.com

Reading aloud doesn't stop in high school. It continues into many English and writing courses. The motivations are, naturally, different from course to course and depend largely upon the instructor.

For my part, I use it as a tool to help students read-see their own writing. Reading your writing aloud often allows you to find places where the writing "stumbles," or doesn't make as much sense as it should, or where punctuation is a bit iffy.

By the same token, hearing your work read by another person clues you in to the same types of weaknesses or interpretation problems. I use it as a workshop tool, or in conference, and just for those reasons.

More importantly, once they get past the initial shock, none of my students truly mind doing it. Everyone does it, and I've already stressed how I expect them to respond to each other in those environments and situations. I believe in encouragement, and most students feel very safe.

Rhonna J. Robbins-Sponaas
rrobbins@rose.net

Teachers First Site

An announcement from Teachers First came this morning with an interesting Web site for writing. Try this page. I went to the site with the online courses for writing (teachers in Hawaii created these courses) and found some ideas for reteaching those infernal research papers that even my seniors are having trouble with.

Here is the address: http://www.teachersfirst.com/cnt-writ.htm

Olivia S. Fulmer
ofulmer@logicsouth.com

TRACI'S LISTS OF TEN

Ten Prewriting Exercises for Personal Narratives

"Traci's Lists of Ten" are lists of thoughtful teaching tips created by Traci Gardner, a former English teacher and now Online Resources Manager for NCTE. To read more of Traci's Lists of Ten, visit http://www.ncte.org/traci/tens.

These prewriting exercises probably work best when combined with a more traditional technique such as using the journalist's questions (who? what? where? when? why? how?). The idea is to ask students to think about the events that they narrate in a less typical way and then to use those thoughts to develop their narratives.

These exercises can be useful after the students have begun drafting, since students think about the details of the event that the writer can add to a working draft. For instance, after scripting a section of the narrative, writers could work on adding dialogue to their working drafts. Or after thinking about the decision points in the series of events, they can add some details to their working drafts on the reasons that the series of events occurred in the way that they did.

The exercises listed below include connections to the writer's working draft, but I'd suggest cutting that part off when assigning the exercises, to help students focus on invention rather than on thinking about how to use the material later. Once they complete the exercise, I'd give them the follow-up application, focusing on their working draft of the narrative itself.

Some of the exercises make for good class or small group discussion as well. If students script pieces, they can read the scripts out loud, assigning one another parts—with the author of the script taking notes on places where the dialogue is difficult or incorrect. Using this technique, writers can find places where their attempt to capture the flow of a conversation is stilted or unrealistic.

Students also seem to enjoy sharing their writing on the event for a tabloid, an interview or as a fable—though the exercise can lead to giggling and noise. Student writers can also benefit from sharing their list of decision points, since classmates can often think of alternatives that the writers do not. By thinking through all the possible alternatives, students are better able to think about the significance of the events for the "So what?" details that they'll need in their narratives.

1. Think of the different people involved in the event that you're narrating as characters in a piece of literature. In the

►

same way that you'd write a character sketch for characters in a short story or play, write a paragraph on each of the people involved in the event you're writing about. Once you've finished, compare the details in your sketches to the details on the characters in your draft. Revise your draft, based on the differences that you find.

2. Sketch out the events as blocks in a comic strip. Don't worry about the artwork—just use stick figures. What events would you focus on in your sketches? What parts would you leave out? Comic strips don't show every single event that occurs; they focus on the events that are necessary to the overall message. Once you've sketched out your blocks, take a look at your working draft. Are the blocks that you include in your comic strip included in the narrative? Are they recognizable—how do the blocks in your comic strip relate to the organizational structure of your narrative? Are the ones that you've left out of the comic strip included in the narrative—if so, what do they add to your overall purpose?

3. Write a version of the events in your narrative for a newspaper article. Remember to include the answers to the journalist's questions (who? what? where? when? why? how?). Focus on the facts as they occurred. Use an inverted pyramid order—begin with the facts and details that are most important to readers and end with the facts that are less important.

Once you've finished, compare the article to your working draft. Have you included all the facts in your draft that you included at the beginning of your newspaper article? Are the details that you include toward the end of the article (the ones that are less important) included in your working draft—are they emphasized or subordinate? Think about what you would want someone who read that newspaper article to know that isn't included in the article itself. Are those points included in your narrative?

4. Outline the events that occur in your narrative. Identify the places where you or others involved had to make a decision of some kind. For each decision point, brainstorm on the alternatives that could have been pursued. What other options were available?

▶

Once you've thought through the possibilities, examine the way that you discuss the decisions in your draft—do you include details on the alternatives? How do these other options affect the way that you think about the event now? Have you looked back at the event that you're writing about and thought, "Gee, I wish I had done that differently"? Add some depth to your narrative by fleshing out alternatives as well as how and when they became important.

5. Choose a time in your narrative when you and other characters are talking with one another. Script out the conversation as an exchange in a play. Try to capture the language in the style that would have actually been used. Make the dialogue accurate to the event; don't worry if it's not Standard Written English (personal conversations rarely are). Once you've scripted out your dialogue, move to your working draft. How does the dialogue that you've written in your script compare to the episode in your narrative? Can you add details from the script to your draft? How would adding the dialogue affect the purpose of your narrative?

6. Describe the events that occurred for a different audience. How does your narrative change if it is written for an older family member, someone interviewing you for a job, a younger student, or someone you have never met before? What would you leave out? What would you add? What would you describe in different language and style? How would the points that you emphasize change?

Once you've thought about the differences, return to your working draft. Are the points that you DO include right for your audience? Are there parts of your alternate version that can be added to your working draft? As you revise, think about how the details in the narrative fit your audience in particular.

7. Reflect on the events as you recall them. Readers will want to know why you're sharing the story. Your narrative needs to answer the question, "So what?" When your readers get to the end of the story, you should have answered the question for them. Draw a chart with three columns. Label the columns as follows:

Events	So What Do/Did I Think?	So What Do/Did Others Think?

Outline the major events in rows under the "Events" column; then, fill in the spaces under the other columns for each of the major events. For each of the columns, try to think about the "So What?" Explain why the event matters to you in the second column, and why the event matters to others involved (directly or indirectly) in the third column. Think about how the events mattered at the time and how they matter now, looking back.

Once you've finished filling in the chart, move to your working draft. Are the "So what?" details that you included in the chart clear in your draft? Are there details that you can add to make the significance of the event understandable to your readers?

Online Interviews with Authors

I thought that everyone might be interested in this. As I was playing at barnesandnoble.com, I stumbled upon Chat Transcripts: transcripts of online interviews with hundreds of authors. I just printed an interesting interview with Sherman Alexie for my students. The site is worth checking out.

The address is: http://www.barnesandnoble.com/community archive/archive.asp

(Among the many writers interviewed are Isabel Allende, Julia Alvarez, Dave Barry, Greg Bear, Judy Blume, Terry Brooks, Walter Mosley, and Kurt Vonnegut.)

Anne Arvidson
annejarvidson@home.com

8. Think about the longevity of the event in your narrative. How will you remember the event five years from now? ten years? twenty-five years? As you think about the effect of the events in the narrative, you need to focus on how the events will matter to you and your readers. What kind of staying power do the events have? Brainstorm or freewrite a few paragraphs on why you think this event will still matter in the future. Once you've written about the longevity and enduring importance, move back to your working draft. When you talk about events, is their staying power clear to the reader? How do you communicate the enduring qualities of the events in your narrative? What details from your brainstorming or freewriting might you work into your draft?

9. Think about the details included in your narrative—facts, sensory details, and emotions. Draw a chart like this:

Facts	Sensory Details	Emotions

Then think about the facts that are important to your narrative, and fill in the chart. Work to find at least ten important facts. For each, think about related sensory details (sight, sound, taste, touch, smell), and consider the emotions related to the facts (fear, pleasure, sadness, etc.). For instance, a fact in my narrative might be "three fresh baked loaves of bread on the kitchen table." For sensory detail, I'd write about the smell of fresh baked

▶

bread, the warmth of the kitchen from the still hot stove, and the golden brown color of the bread. For emotions, I'd write about how the loaves of bread gave me a happy feeling as I remembered how my father always bakes bread for special holidays and how my grandmother always baked us bread when we visited her. Once you've finished working through the chart for the facts from your paper, move back to your working draft. Are the sensory details and emotions that you included in the chart communicated in your draft? Revise to add details, taking material from your chart whenever you can.

10. Write an account of the events in your narrative for a fable, a tabloid, or a television or radio interview. These options give you a lot of room for creativity. What happens if the people involved in the events were animals and you had to come up with a moral? If the events were reported in a tabloid paper, what would be emphasized? Where would things be embellished? What would be left out? Finally, if you were interviewed about the event, what would you include in your story—your answer depends on where you're being interviewed (by Barbara Walters once you're rich and famous? on a talk show by Oprah? on a late night show by David Letterman or Jay Leno?) Be sure to indicate where you're being interviewed.

Once you finish your alternate account of the events, move to your working draft. Are there facts that you can add now that you've thought about the events in your narrative from a different point of view? Are there facts that seem less important? Can they be deleted? Did you add details and description to your account that can be revised and added to your draft? What parts of your alternate version wouldn't make any sense at all in your final draft of the narrative?

Traci Gardner is NCTE Online Resources Manager.

Tips

Alice Walker: Living by the Word

by Carol Jago

This excerpt is taken from Alice Walker in the Classroom: "Living by the Word," *a new book published by NCTE.*

Few students respond to the news that they will be studying poetry with anything but groans. I believe the reason for this is that their experience of poetry has mostly been one of bafflement. The typical scenario goes something like this. Teacher tells students that they are going to study a wonderful poem by ______________ (fill in the blank). Teacher then tells students a few things about the wonderful poet. Teacher reads a poem aloud while students follow along in their books. Students find the poem incomprehensible. Teacher asks questions about the poem. Students stare into space. Uneasy with the silence, teacher answers her own questions. (A worse-case scenario has the teacher handing out the questions for students to answer "in complete sentences" for homework.) It isn't that students hate the genre. It's just that they have never yet met a poem they liked.

Inviting students to find a poem they like

A few years ago I decided to try and find an alternative to this deadly technique. Checking out all the individual volumes of poetry in our school library and then spreading them around the classroom, I asked students to find a poem that spoke to them and that they would like to share with the rest of us. I warned students that some of the poems they might stumble upon should probably be rated R. I urged them to use good judgement if a particular poem offended them and simply turn the page or pick up a different book. There was something for everyone's taste here.

Since the task didn't seem too onerous, students readily complied. Browsing through the books, they tasted, rejected, picked up another volume, leaned across the aisle to show a friend what they had found, laughed, and generally carried on like kids in a candy store. No one seemed to have difficulty finding a poem to like. But then questions began floating to the front of the room. "Can we bring a poem from home?" "Is it OK to choose something we've written?" "What if the poem uses bad language?" "How long does it have to be?" "How long can it be?" "Can I read more

▶

Tips

Alice Walker

Continued

than one?" Instead of answering their questions, I posed another. "What should be our criteria for choosing a poem to share?" Together we agreed upon the following:

Poems to be shared should

- be able to be read in less than 3 minutes.
- not be too hard for listeners to understand.
- be something the chooser really likes a lot.
- use language appropriate for a school setting.
- make listeners think.
- make listeners want to hear the poem again or read it for themselves.

This discussion seemed to answer their questions and help them make good choices. Employing this strategy for beginning a unit on poetry over the years, I began to notice a trend. Again and again students chose Alice Walker poems to share. Her books began to fall open to their favorite poems, for example, "Did This Happen to Your Mother? Did Your Sister Throw Up a Lot?"

Using the poems students like as a springboard for instruction

If so many students felt this poem was powerful, it seemed foolish for me to leave it to chance that they would find it on their own. I began to incorporate Walker's poem into my lesson plans. Writing only its title on the board, I asked students why they thought Alice Walker might have called her poem "Did This Happen to Your Mother? Did Your Sister Throw Up a Lot?" Students immediately recognized how effectively these questions capture a reader's atten-tion.

Guillermo: It's weird.

Jamie: Yeh, it makes you want to find out if these are real questions or what.

Ms. Jago: So what do you think the poem is going to be about?

Guillermo: It reminds me of a movie I saw about a girl with bulemia. Maybe the poem is going to be about that.

Amy: I don't think so, Guillermo. I think she's being ironic or sarcastic or something like that. It seems too quirky to be realistic.

Jamie: I'm not sure about quirky. I think it's going to be sad.

Ms. Jago: Why sad?

Jamie: Well, I never saw anyone happy about throwing up.

Ms. Jago: Good point. Let's read and find out.

Louise Rosenblatt and Reader Response Theory

What I hope to accomplish by this prereading activity is to move students from a passive to an active state. Background information about Alice Walker can wait. So can my lecture on free verse. What is important here is to lay the groundwork for genuine literary response. According to Louise Rosenblatt, good readers, active readers, conduct a transaction with the text. The reader creates meaning from the words on the page while the text causes the reader to re-examine what he or she knows. The text and the reader interact. By asking students to reflect on the title of a poem before they ever see the text, I hope to suggest that they are going to have to do some work here as readers.

What is so powerful about Rosenblatt's insight into literature study is the way she situates the study of literature at the center of every child's life. It is not only the college-bound or future English teachers who need the nourishment that literature can provide, but all students. She explains that "literature makes comprehensible the myriad ways in which human beings meet the infinite possibilities that life offers. The reader seeks to participate in another's vision—to reap knowledge of the world, to fathom the resources of the human spirit, to gain insights that will make his own life more comprehensible" (7). I cannot help but think that it was my students' unconscious recognition of Rosenblatt's insight that caused them to choose Alice Walker's poems year after year as their favorites. Walker was raising the same questions that they were asking themselves.

Carol Jago teaches English at Santa Monica High School and directs the California Reading and Literature Project at UCLA.

To order *Alice Walker in the Classroom* (stock # 01143-1525) or *Nikki Giovanni in the Classroom*, also by Carol Jago (stock # 52120-1525), call 877-369-6283 or send e-mail to orders@ncte.org. Each is $9.95, NCTE members; $12.95, non-NCTE members.

TEACHER TALK

Emergency Measures for Ugly Classrooms

I need help! Please if anyone can help me decorate! My classroom is a trailer that used to be a locker room. It is 8-10 feet in width and 20 feet long. I don't get paid enough to go out and buy new wallpaper or paint or even the posters they sell at the education shops. The students are always complaining that it is too loud because there is nothing to absorb the sound. The walls are easily broken through, and the roof is tin. Students are also having a hard time working because it is just plain ugly in there. We did use movie posters for a while, but those were ripped apart and written on. Does anyone have any good ideas for inexpensive decorations?

Kathryn Wilson
kater07@tampabay.rr.com

The kids are complaining? Let the kids do the work. Dig through your school office and find some construction paper. Have students put their assignments on construction paper and decorate them. My students just finished a character sketch, and I had them "frame them" and now they're hanging on my walls. Have the students find a quotation they feel represents who they are/what they like to do. Write/type it on paper, decorate it and hang it up.

Can't afford construction paper? Offer students five extra credit points for every package they bring in.

Hang up a long piece of butcher paper with a few markers attached. Have a question each week ("What is your favorite way to spend a rainy day?") for students to write/draw their responses.

Basically, it's not your job to decorate the room—it's theirs. You need to provide the opportunity and the tools, and they need to provide the imagination and the effort.

Kelly Flanigan
kelvin069@yahoo.com

Get the kids involved in thinking up ideas. Ask them who their heroes are; get pictures from magazines. Maybe each week one team gets to put up a hero picture and talk about it and write some reasons why this idol is a good hero—and that might lead to some discussion relating to the literature you are studying. What makes a hero?

Try getting a magnetic poetry kit or Office Max refrigerator magnets (a small pack is inexpensive) that students could make their own magnetic poetry stuff on. Ask local newspaper for extra end-print newspaper rolls to make flip charts and borders.

What are you studying? Would a timeline around the room be appropriate? or drawings that go with the literature? I'd go scrounge at a thrift shop or discount craft store and get kids creating meaningful collages. Maybe use a Kodak MAX camera to take a photo of each student, and put up along with their self-written "I like — about me" on poster board? Get kids writing letters to local businesses to see what they can contribute.

Janet Bone
janetwbone@yahoo.com

I don't know what grade you teach, but last year my 7th graders did a fabric quilt of *The Giver*. About half way through the reading, we discussed symbols for each chapter. Then, in groups of four they painted their chapter on felt squares. Students from another class stitched the squares together for extra credit and we ended up with a 6' x 8' felt blanket which we hung on the walls. The kids loved it and fabric does absorb some noise. You can usually get fabric samples donated by those high class decorating stores (they just throw out discontinued samples). The fabric paint was the most expensive—but when one of our craft stores has their midnight madness sale (fabric paint becomes four for $1), I load up.

I also did a project a few years ago with point of view, reading the original three little pigs and the "new" version. Then I gave cut-outs of pigs and wolves. The kids decided whose viewpoint they agreed with and wrote their justification on the cut-outs, decorated their animals, and we strung them around the room.

Essentially, I believe in decorating with the kids' work, and I cover every square inch of the classroom I'm in. In fact, after leaving my beautified room in middle school, I began teaching at a high school where I shared the ugliest portable imaginable (one paneled wall was falling down) and used some of my middle students' work to liven the room up until my high school students generated story boards, character masks, etc.

I am now sharing a normal room with another teacher — we've run out of wall and door space — my next project will involve hanging butterflies from the ceiling (*I Never Saw Another Butterfly*).

Michelle Garbis
mirehol@netrox.net

Let the students come up with their own ideas of how the classroom should be decorated. Since it is their environment, it should be filled with things that they like. Have them make up a list of four or five possible themes—movies, art,

▶

literature—and vote for their favorite. Then have the students find various pieces that go with that particular theme.

John
Jcalh59393@aol.com

For decor, instead of spending a fortune on those terrific inspirational posters, I tore out full-page photos from *TRAVEL AND LEISURE* and *VOGUE* and *GOURMET* and mounted them on construction paper. Then I asked students to make up sayings or come up with one word. I typed them up, and now we have our own inspirational images. Time to replace, though! My son advises me, "Mom, you gotta have neat stuff for your kids to look at when they get bored." Now how's that for confidence?

Angeline Vogl
avogl@kings.k12.ca.us

Classroom Solutions

Stage Fright

How do you help students who have extreme stage fright?

In the past, I have had students give the speech to me after school. Or I've suggested all kinds of compromises: give the speech to a small group, give the speech while sitting down, give the speech with your back to audience, give the speech while looking at only one person.

Give a one-sentence speech, or just give the name of the speech. Give the intro one day, the body the next, the conclusion the next. Take a glass of water with you. Use a screen or lectern to hide behind.

I've tried to help by discussing reasons for stage fright, such as wanting to do a good job. I've asked, "What exactly are you afraid of? What is the very worst that can happen to you?"

I tell my students that no one has died, fainted, cried, or soiled their pants while giving a speech, and they are not going to spoil my 24-year-old record. I explain that everybody has stage fright. Practice is the way to overcome it. I compare it to performing in music or sports. I compare it to conversation. I tell the student he or she is not alone.

Would turning out the lights help? I have been on stage when I couldn't see the audience. For me that is worse, for some it's sheer heaven.

J.C. Triplett
tripletj@mail.usd475.k12.ks.us

First of all, tell the kids that if they can't manage to leave the decorations you DO put up alone, they have no right to complain about how ugly the room is. Wal-Mart and K-Mart have those $5–10 prints of paintings. They also have posters for about $4 with nifty sayings about life (in those racks with the Backstreet boys, NASCAR, etc.)

I photocopy comics and put them up. And Shel Silverstein poems. Have the students do some artwork about a story or poem you are studying, then hang it up. Make a border with some crepe paper or big sheets of construction paper. I hang up student poetry every now and then. Put up some of your favorite sayings. Have the students find some, and let them illustrate theirs.

Shane
shanem@bright.net

If you have cheap or free access to a laminator, you might do this: on the rolling kind of laminator, I place old calendar pictures, evenly spaced, then keep in long pieces to hang on the wall. You might also check video stores for movie posters. Travel agencies supposedly are a good source, but I haven't had good luck with them. Build up your supply of posters inexpensively watching for clearance sales—post-holiday things.

I don't laminate posters any more because the light glares off of them too much. I'll often enlarge/photocopy illustrations that fit with a unit and "matte" them on construction paper.

Wendy V. Weber
snwweber@nedcomm.nm.org

I always spend money on art supplies, so my room, which up until last year hadn't been painted in 20 years, looks colorful. Students work on graphics for their reading very frequently. Sometimes it is mandalas, sometimes it is mind-maps, or giant book covers illustrating something we've read. These all make great decorations. And students tend not to mess with the things they've created.

Another thing I've had them do: use old file folders (our English dept. accidentally bought legal-size once and they don't fit anything but make great project paper) and make found poems. These make interesting posters.

Students can also create bumper stickers based on reading. A uniform sized font and one computer can make these graphically fun and interesting to stare at. This project is quick and easy, so many if not all students will contribute.

▶

I do hang a couple of my own things up—an Apple poster of Jane Goodall and one of Cesar Chavez, a Korean calendar, some wonderful photos of African art, and drawings and art that students have done.

If you think you will be there for a while, make books and book displays part of it all. There is a web page that shows you how to make bookshelves out of white plastic rain gutters. Click on Rain Gutters on "Jim Trelease on Reading" Web page at http://www.trelease-on-reading.com/home.html. Here's another favorite. Read a play and have the kids do mobiles for each act or scene. Works great with *ROMEO AND JULIET*. Show them paper dolls for inspiration, or not. Mobiles can be specified characters, props, setting features, etc. Then hang them from the ceiling. Very cool.

Lynne Culp
lculp@earthlink.net

Color in a classroom really makes a difference! Does your school buy those big rolls of colored bulletin board paper (rolls are four feet wide)? I often have placed long (4–8 ft.) spreads of colored bulletin board paper on a wall where no bulletin board exists. Sometimes I put up a border, sometimes not. I use it like a bulletin board to post student work. I usually have to glue on any lettering I put up on these impromptu display areas. If your school does not supply the big colored rolls of paper, you could go to a fabric store and purchase fabric remnants and use in the same way. Fabric is usually 48 or 60 inches in width.

An easy idea for putting up any wall decorations is to hot glue the fabric or impromptu paper "bulletin board." The hot glue adheres to anything as long as you want it to and then pops off at the end of the year with a pull of the fingers. Those teacher stores that sell elementary stuff usually sell the bulletin board paper I am talking about, and all sorts of borders. The stores will sell the bulletin board paper by the foot and carry all the available colors. It costs about $2.00 to buy enough paper to cover a big bulletin board or a stretch of your wall.

Here is a link to an entire list of school suppliers. http://www.edgamesandart.com/edusupplieslinks.html#schlsppl.

If you cannot find anyone near you, Kurtz Bros. (from PA) has a wonderful catalog that they will send you. They are on the list at the above Web address, and have their own Web site at http://www.kurtzbros.com/.

Cindy Adams
cindyea3@aol.com

Why not have the kids bring stuff in? My friend has five areas on the walls of her room—music, nature, sports, culture, and student work. She bought some old calendars from a used bookshop and brought in some of her own photos and posters, and then had the kids supply the rest. In the student work section, she took photos of all her students and placed them next to their work.

In my room, we have student work and some random posters that I had lying around. But in one corner, I have a lounging area for paper conferences or for when the students finish ahead of time. There, I've posted poetry and quotes and have a makeshift table (a covered box) with magazines, short stories, and such placed on it. Also adjacent to that area is student artwork. The others are always amazed that their friends are the ones who painted/drew the work, too.

Diane M. Ichikawa
dmichikawa@earthlink.net

Do you and your students have access to computers/color printers? If so, have them make 8½" x 11" posters of their favorite quotations. (They can do a little research ahead of time to select favorites if they don't already have some in mind.) This works particularly well with a program like Print Shop Deluxe. As another talkie has mentioned, if you can have the posters laminated, they'll last a LONG time.

Portia
lamar170@aol.com

I think somewhere in *ENGLISH JOURNAL* I saw a cute idea that might be nice for your classroom. Ask half of your stu-

▶

dents to outline their left feet on construction paper (white paper would do, too), and ask the other half to outline their right feet. Then ask each student to write words which describe his/her personality (soul?) The left and right feet are paired and so you have the class standing on the walls.

Keren Rosa
kh_rosa@hotmail.com

In one of the rooms that I share, the teacher has put her TAs to work papering the walls. The secret is that she had kids bring in old Far Side desk calendars—the square ones with a daily cartoon. She has them paste them up with cheap Vano liquid starch. They use foam brushes and put up about twenty five a day. I can only guess what a fun time your classes would have with some inexpensive brushes and a few glue jugs of liquid starch. After just a Sunday or two of color comics cut out and pasted up, your room would be so much more colorful.

The one year I had a room for more than two hours in one day, I started gathering up the lunch menu/calendars from the mail room. They always use the most colorful paper and only print on one side. I had my TAs that year cut them into funky shaped borders that I used to frame student work. Do a visual arts lesson on form and line and color and have the kids create their own masterpieces on cheap white butcher paper using mixable water-based poster paints. I got some old bottles of paint from our art teachers. They're always happy to clean out their cupboards.

Here's another idea for making sound baffles: Get butcher paper and have kids trace each other onto double thickness sheets. Stuff with newspaper and seal the edges and then hang them on the walls. Paint them first to look like the person traced. Or, make big birds and palm trees and sand dunes the same way and tropicalize the space.

Every Wal-Mart has a dollar-a-yard fabric table that would make dreadful dresses, but wonderful wall coverings with the Vano starch idea again. It's great to use because everything stays put and then just peels right back off, especially fabric.

It's really very simple.

You'll need:
Liquid starch (Vano is a brand name here—get what they sell in your neighborhood)
foam paintbrushes (minimum: rags)
bowls
Clean up materials (soap and water)

1. Clean the surface first—grease-free, dust free

2. Paint the item with the liquid starch, both sides. (if using rags, apply the starch by daubing the surface)

3. Put the item on the wall. Smooth it with a ruler or your hand.

4. Let it dry.

If you're using fabric, you have to immerse it in the starch. You can thin the starch a little with water. You'll use more starch faster, but you'll be covering more wall at one time. That's really all there is to it.

Putting up fabric and starch on a painted wall, with at least a semi-gloss finish, will leave a minimal residue. It washes off with water and rags. It will not peel the paint, if the finish is sound to begin with. I would never try the starch and fabric on a wall with a flat or matte finish, unless guaranteed scrub-able. Same goes for raw wood, which would soak up so much starch as to make it unfeasible.

If your painted surface has cracks or bubbles, you may find it peeling with the fabric. But you could certainly do some preliminary paint patching to avoid peeling later on. I've never had anything peel, and we've put up two different fabric wall coverings in our daughters' bedroom.

Del Hughes
Clackanaw@aol.com

Try using the color movie advertisements from the *NEW YORK TIMES* Sunday edition. My students love them. You do have to watch the ratings of the movies and the age level that you teach.

Alice Faribault
afaribau@sowashco.k12.mn.us

If you have a graphics program, like Printmaster or Printshop, you can grab graphics (cartoons, photographs, artwork, etc.) off the web and put them into your own posters to print out of a color laser printer. I've made several posters of author's homes or the sites where a piece of literature takes place. They are small, but they can be colorful, and relatively cheap once you have the equipment/software.

Also, try using maps. They can be big and colorful. See if someone you know has a subscription to *NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC* and would be willing to give you the maps. They do a national and a world map on alternating years. You could laminate the maps and use string to point out areas important to what you are studying.

For bulletin boards, try using wrapping paper. Some at the discount places can be really cheap. You will need several rolls. I usually buy two rolls for each of my 4' x 4' bulletin boards. You could use ribbon for a border.

If you live near a college community, check the college bookstore, particularly a few weeks after the start of a term. They often have leftover posters they are happy to get rid of.

Lastly, keep your eyes open! Sometimes you find posters in the oddest places. I have a great poster of a lake with a Thoreau quote that was given away for free when a local

►

store did an environmental campaign. After a holiday, hit the card shops and buy up the leftover decorations to use next year. You'll never know what you can find!

Mary Coppenbarger
coppenba@bbchs.k12.il.us

To add to these great ideas: paper table cloths also make good bulletin board backgrounds; the post office will give you their advertising posters for new stamps after they are done with them, if you ask for them; I buy lots of calendars every July—they are often only a dollar a piece, and they make great visual aids.

Kelley Paystrup
Kelley.Paystrup@snow.edu

Try thrift shops for used cheap draperies for sound deadening. Pin student work to these.

Have a paint party some evening. Have students bring used paint from home.

John Triplett
triplej@mail.usd475.k12.ks.us

Teachers in any area can get a 10 percent discount at JoAnn fabric stores. I'm not sure about the details of the program, but it might be worth looking into if a store is located nearby.

Terri Kaufman
tkaufman@ctaz.com

I too was on a very limited budget and needed to spruce up my ugly classroom. I raided the teacher workroom (even the elementary school's work room) and made a bunch of stuff out of butcher paper.

I went through a quote book and got quotes on writing, character, humor, life, reading, etc. I used markers, different colored butcher paper, and random drawings, and made my own posters. When you laminate them, they will look much better. Then I hot glued them all over the room. The posters themselves aren't that hot to look at, but when you throw them all up in your room, the varying colors, shapes, and designs really come together.

I also make posters out of different things, such as the comic page, or cut out pictures of a bunch of things from magazines, calendars, etc. (like flowers, smiley faces, etc.—sort of a decoupage).

Also, for a bulletin board or just wall decor idea, I go to my card maker program on my computer, pick a neat or appropriate graphic and print it out. Make an overhead of it at school, put it on the overhead, and draw the giant-sized graphic on white butcher paper. Color, cut out, and laminate. I do this for my bulletin boards (which are a huge challenge to me) and I do this for random graphics I like to blow up and glue to the walls. I have giant suns, flowers, and geometric designs on my walls. Finally, hang stuff from the ceiling, if your ceiling will allow it. I've got cheap ivy vines hanging around (Wal-Mart, $3.00 each), and we recently hung snowflakes from the ceiling (they were also haiku poems, too). Now I get comments every day from students and colleagues on the appearance of the classroom.

Jennifer Jones
jenjones@dicksonstreet.com

Did someone mention using an overhead projector? Photocopy any picture onto an overhead and shine it on the wall. Sketch the outline and then color or shade in. I had portraits of Faulkner, Poe, and Dickinson with Baldwin on the way when I was transferred out of the room to a larger room. The portraits are still there. I'm having a 15' x 8' kitchen god painted onto one ugly wall of my new room. No one's complained yet and the kids love the majesty. Now, if I can figure how to cover the entire ceiling with The Bard . . . .

Mark Heydon
mheydon@santarosa.edu

Don't know how many of you know the Syracuse Cultural Workers catalog and products, but I got their calendar this year, made an order based on just what was listed on the last page and just got an absolutely beautiful poster. There are dozens of buttons and stickers, many simply clever or amusing, and lots of green/peace and justice stuff as well. Buttons I hadn't seen before and liked:

> *The most violent element in society is ignorance.*
> —Emma Goldman

> *It's Too Bad That The People Who Really Know How To Run The Country Are Busy Teaching School*

Many of their products are designed or supplemented for educational use. The catalog is free, fun and inspirational. Here's their email address: scw@syrcultural workers.org. Here's the Web address: http://www.syrculturalworkers.org/AlphaPromo.htm

Judith Angelo
adeba@cn.com

Thank you for all the suggestions! I am compiling a list of suggestions for the coming weeks and years. Again, I am very grateful to all of you.

Kathryn Wilson
kater07@tampabay.rr.com

FOCUS ON LITERARY TERMS

Figurative Language

by Brian Moon

This exercise is reprinted from LITERARY TERMS: A PRACTICAL GLOSSARY *by Brian Moon (NCTE, 1999).*

LITERARY TERMS *includes examples drawn from classic literary sources as well as from popular books, films, and television shows, combined with brief activities to help students develop a working knowledge of the concepts.*

To order LITERARY TERMS: A PRACTICAL GLOSSSARY, *call the NCTE Customer Service Department at 800-369-6283. Stock no. 38705-3125; price: $21.95 ($15.95 NCTE members).*

TO GET YOU THINKING

- Can you say what two things are being compared in each of the following phrases?

Phrase	*Elements*
My love is like a red, red rose.	Lover & flower
The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas.	______ & ______
The minister waddled up to the speaker's platform, ruffled his plumage importantly, and addressed the crowd.	______ & ______
Shared beliefs are the foundation of any society.	______ & ______
The old man in the corner was well known for spinning yarns.	______ & ______

- Are these "special" uses of language? Would you find any of them in everyday conversation?

THEORY

The term "figurative" language has traditionally referred to language which differs from everyday, "nonliterary" usage. Figures were seen as stylistic ornaments with which writers dressed up their language to make it more entertaining, and to clarify the meanings they wanted to convey.

According to this view, literary devices such as *metaphor, simile, rhythm,* and so on, embellished "ordinary" language, and so forced readers to work harder at making meaning in a text. Nowadays we recognize that all language is in some sense "figurative": there are very few ways of talking and writing about the world that do not make use of comparisons, symbols, and so on.

The following are some important figures.

Simile

The comparison of two elements, where each maintains its own identity. For example: "My love is like a red, red rose." Here a person is compared to a flower in a way that suggests they have certain features in common, such as beauty, fragility, and so on.

Metaphor

The merging of two elements or ideas, where one is used to modify the meaning of the other. For example: "The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas." Here the image of the moon in a cloudy night sky is merged with that of a sailing ship on stormy seas, so that some characteristics of the latter are transferred to the former.

Metonym

The use of a part to represent a whole, or the use of one item to stand for another with which it has become associated. For example, in the news headline "Palace Shocked by Secret Photos," the palace stands for the royal family and their aides.

Personification

The description of a nonhuman force or object in terms of a person or living thing. For example, "The gnarled branches clawed at the clouds." Here, the tree branches are given the characteristic of grasping hands.

Symbol

The substitution of one element for another as a matter of convention rather than similarity.

For example, in the biblical story of Adam and Eve, the serpent is used as a symbol of temptation. In the ceremonies of the modern Olympics, white doves symbolize peace and freedom. Language itself is also symbolic, since words and meanings are associated purely by convention.

Because so much of our language is "figurative" rather than literal, there is always room for disagreement about the meanings of words, phrases, and texts. Different groups of readers may well "decode" such language in different ways, according to their beliefs, values, and social practices.

In exploring the language of "literary" and "nonliterary" texts, we need to consider the range of readings made possible by figures of speech, and how this range of possibilities is limited or closed off by other features in the text and by specific ways of reading.

▶

PRACTICE

The following extract is from Colin Thiele's story "The Shell." In these passages, some of the figurative language has been set in **bolder** type.

> The green sea swept into the shallows and **seethed** there **like slaking quicklime.** It surged over the rocks, tossing up spangles of water like a **juggler** and catching them deftly again behind. It raced knee deep through the clefts and crevices, twisted and tortured in a thousand ways, till it swept **nuzzling and sucking** into the holes at the base of the cliff.
>
> The shell lay in a saucer of rock. It was a green cowrie, clean and new, **its pink undersides as delicate as human flesh.** All around it the rocks dropped away sheer or **leaned out** in an overhang streaked with dripping strands of **slime like wet hair.** The waves spumed over it, hissing and curling, but the shell **tumbled the water off its back** or just rocked gently **like a bead in the palm of the hand.**

[In the course of the story two fishermen are swept from the rocks by a wave "like a hand." The story concludes with two policemen searching the beach for the bodies.]

> The first man searched down along the shore and stopped near a rock exposed by the ebb. "Look at this shell," he called. "It's a beauty. A green cowrie." **"Blood money! The sea's buying you off!"** He watched distastefully as the first man reached down and closed his fingers beneath the smooth pink underside of the shell, **as delicate as human flesh.** And the sea came **gurgling** gently round his shoes, **like a cat** rubbing its back against his legs.

[Note: quicklime = a fizzy, acid solution]

1. Quote words or phrases from the extract as follows:

Figures	*Quotations*
A phrase which *personifies* the sea	
A *simile* which makes the sea seem playful	
A *metaphor* which compares the sea to a baby	
A *simile* which makes the sea seem calculating	
A *symbol* of trading	

2. What characteristics are given to the sea by these comparisons? Make your selections by matching items from the two lists below.

Comparison	*Characteristics*
The juggler	capricious (changeable, selfish)
The baby	ruthless
The trader	innocent, not responsible
quicklime	skillful, playful
The cat	damaging

Can these items be matched up in more than one combination? Is there room for disagreement about what figurative expressions might mean?

3. Which of the following reasons might explain why the sea has been characterized as a living thing?
   - because it makes the story more entertaining?
   - because Western cultures see life in terms of a competition between humans and nature?
   - because it provides a mythical explanation for events that otherwise seem meaningless?
   - the characterization is purely accidental?

Summary

Figurative language is that which provides the reader with comparisons, substitutions, and patterns that shape meaning. Literary texts sometimes make concentrated use of figurative language. However, most language is figurative in some sense, because words do not have single, objective meanings.

NOTES

2000 Banned Books Week

The eighteenth annual Banned Books Week, sponsored by the American Library Association and other organizations, will take place September 23–30, 2000. This year's theme is "Fish in the River of Knowledge: Celebrate Your Freedom to Read." The purpose of the week is to highlight the value of freedom of expression and the right to read. For more information, including how to order materials, visit http://www.ala.org/bbooks/.

For more information on censorship issues, visit NCTE's censorship page at http://www.ncte.org/censorship. The site contains several censorship resources, including information about and examples from NCTE's *Rationales for Challenged Books* CD-ROM, which contains over 200 rationales for more than 170 books and films.

Censorship Problem?

NCTE offers advice, helpful documents, and other support at no cost to K–12 teachers, schools, and districts that are forced with challenges to literary works, films and videos, or teaching methods. Leave a message at 800-369-6283, ext. 3848, or call Charles Suhor, NCTE/SLATE Field Representative, directly at 334-280-4758. You can also report a censorship incident via NCTE's Censorship web site at www.ncte.org/censorship.

Film Reviews for Responsible Parents

A new Web site of interest is Arthur Taussig's award-winning "Film Reviews for Responsible Parents," at http://www.FilmValues.com. With a database of over 800 film reviews, and categories such as age recommendations, plot summary, violence/scariness, sexuality and gender issues, emotional stress, blood or gore, alternate film recommendations, and watchability for adults, this site offers evaluations without political, religious, or social bias, to help parents make decisions about what their kids should and should not be watching.

Poetry Festival

The Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival 2000 will be held September 21–24 at Waterloo Village, Stanhope, New Jersey, and will include readings and conversations with over 100 poets, including Gwendolyn Brooks, Mark Doty, Yusef Kommunyakaa, Gerald Stern, and C.K. Williams. To order tickets through Ticketmaster, call 201-507-8900; 212-307-7171; 914-454-3388; or 203-624-0033. Festival updates: www.grdodge.org/poetry. E-mail: festival@grdodge.org.

Exchange Program

The Share! High School Exchange Program is seeking families to host students from more than 25 countries for homestays during the 2000/2001 school year. The students speak English, have complete medical insurance coverage, and bring their own spending money. To learn more, contact Chris Good at 217-662-2573 or call 800-313-5758.

INVIGORATE YOUR TEACHING

Use an NCTE Plus Membership to put a fresh spark into your teaching. Every Plus Membership includes:

- Voting membership in the NCTE Secondary Section.
- A subscription to the NCTE newspaper, *The Council Chronicle*.
- A subscription to *Classroom Notes Plus*, a quarterly publication of practical teaching ideas contributed by teachers across the country. Each issue is packed with dozens of immediately usable ideas (published January, April, August, and October).
- *Ideas Plus*, an annual book of classroom ideas and exercises covering the teaching of composition, literature, and language. *Ideas Plus* provides a ready reserve of teaching ideas—ones you can use with existing lessons. In addition, it will help in creating new units and reviving old ones.

Become an NCTE Plus member for only $45 per year. Or, if you are already an NCTE member, add Plus to your membership for only $15 per year. (NCTE Plus will run concurrently with your existing membership.)

☐ **YES**, I'd like to join NCTE and become an NCTE Plus member today $45.00

☐ **YES**, I am already an NCTE member, and I would like to add NCTE Plus to my existing membership $15.00

Your current membership number: ____________

Name ____________

Address ____________

City ____________ State ______ Zip ______

Phone: Home ____________ Office ____________

☐ Remittance enclosed.
(Make your check payable to NCTE.)

☐ Charge my VISA or MasterCard.
Account Number ____/____/____/____
Exp. Date ____/____

☐ Bill me ____________
(Your signature)

P-3125

YOU MAY ALSO CALL 1-877-369-6283
OR GO ONLINE AT
WWW.NCTE.ORG/MEM/ENROLL.FORM.HTML

CLASSROOM NOTES

A QUARTERLY OF TEACHING IDEAS OCTOBER 2000

In This Issue

How Do You Help Students Recognize Style and Voice?

Focus on Multicultural Education

Suggestions for Working with Students with Disabilities

From the National Council of
Teachers of English

CLASSROOM NOTES Plus

Project Coordinator
Felice A. Kaufmann

Editorial Assistant
Emily Nafziger

Design
Joellen Bryant

Consultant
NCTE Associate Executive Director
Dale Allender

Copyright © 2000 by the National Council of Teachers of English. Volume 18, Number 2 (October 2000)

It is the policy of NCTE in its journals and other publications to provide a forum for the open discussion of ideas concerning the content and the teaching of English and the language arts. Publicity accorded to any particular point of view does not imply endorsement by the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, or the membership at large, except in announcements of policy, where such endorsement is clearly specified.

CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS (ISSN 1526-5641) is published four times a year, in January, April, August, and October, by the National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096, as an exclusive benefit of CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS membership. Annual membership dues are $45.00; $15.00 of this amount is for CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS. Inquiries about NCTE Plus membership or communications regarding change of address and permission to reprint should be addressed to CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096. Periodical postage paid at Urbana, Illinois, and at additional mailing offices.

Cover photo: Elizabeth Crews

Photo: Elizabeth Crews

Call for Submissions

CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS invites your descriptions of original, unpublished teaching practices for consideration. In the case of an adapted idea, we ask that you clearly identify any sources that deserve mention.

To make your description as useful as possible to CLASSROOM Notes Plus readers, we suggest that you consider questions like these as you prepare your submission: What are the goals of the activity or classroom practice? What makes it especially meaningful for you and your students? How do you introduce this idea to students? In what ways do their interests and ideas help direct the course of this activity? What natural progression does this activity usually follow? How are students encouraged to reflect on their learning? How do you judge this practice to be effective? How would you change your implementation of it in the future?

Please submit double-spaced, typed copy. Receipt of your submission will be acknowledged by postcard, but acknowledgment does not guarantee publication. We are unable to return manuscripts, so please keep a copy. We reserve the right to edit submissions for clarity and length.

All CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS submissions will be considered for the print version of CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS, for inclusion on the CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS Web page (www.ncte.org/notesplus), or for use in the annual edition of IDEAS PLUS.

Send submissions to CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS, 1111 W. Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801-1096 or send e-mail to notesplus@ncte.org. For more information, call or e-mail Felice Kaufmann at NCTE Headquarters: 1-800-369-6283, ext. 3648; fkaufmann@ncte.org.

Many of the e-mail contributions in this issue are reprinted from NCTE-talk, an electronic discussion group sponsored by NCTE. To read interesting discussions on a variety of topics related to secondary teaching, visit the NCTE-talk archives at http://www.ncte.org/lists/ncte-talk/achives.html or click on Site Map from the NCTE home page (www.ncte.org) and choose NCTE-talk Archives.

The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.

—William A. Ward

Watch for additional *Tips* throughout this issue!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Ideas from the Classroom

The Granddaughter Project—Kay Hinkebein ____ 2
Putting Rock and Roll into Writing—Cecelia A. Murphy ____ 2
Getting the Move On: Revision in the Computer Lab —Jim Lonergan and Donna-Marie Stupple ____ 4
The Writing Checklist: An Easy Way to Review Grammar —Pamela J. Orth ____ 7
Their Day to "Howl": Ginsberg Brings Out the Poetic Best in Middle School Students—Alfree Enciso ____ 18

Teacher Talk

How Do You Help Students Recognize Style and Voice? ____ 6
Suggestions for Working with Students with Disabilities ____ 14

Classroom Solutions

Custodians and Keys ____ 7
Late-Work Tickets ____ 10

Focus on Multicultural Education

Deepening the Meaning of Heritage Months ____ 9

Traci's Lists of Ten

Ten Ways to Play with Literature—Traci Gardner ____ 12

Web Resources

WebQuests ____ 17
EdSitement ____ 18
Teaching Poetry ____ 19
Notes ____ 21
Join NCTE Plus ____ 21

IDEAS FROM THE CLASSROOM

This issue brings together a smorgasbord of ideas for teaching writing and revision, plus a feature on the importance of making Heritage month celebrations more than a reinforcement of stereotypes.

"Suggestions for Working with Students with Disabilities" helps to answer questions teachers might have about how to make the classroom a supportive place for students who have severe physical challenges. And if you're planning a poetry unit, you'll want to check out "Their Day to 'Howl'" and the new poetry strategies available on the CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS Web site (www.notesplus.org).

The Granddaughter Project

I teach in an all-girls Catholic high school, and I developed this project to go along with class study of FAHRENHEIT 451.

Since so many of the events in the novel have come true in the years since Bradbury wrote it, I gave my students the challenge of predicting what life will be like for their granddaughters.

I asked them to choose from two of five categories—clothing, housing, transportation, schools and education, and entertainment/recreation—and to use drawings or pictures to explain those elements of life in the future. In addition to the pictures, students were to write and present an explanation of their predictions. The final component of the project was a letter to their granddaughter, describing details of their own life and sharing whatever they thought the grandchild would like to know about them.

This project has led to creative thinking and interesting responses from my students. Students have drawn and described cars that move by suctioning air off the street much like a vacuum cleaner, and that clean the streets while driving.

There have also been cars that are powered by water or by black dirt. Clothing has included material made of plastic, a ball gown made of recycled newspaper and tin cans, and my all-time favorite—a jumpsuit that allows the wearer to choose his or her "figure type" for the day.

In the housing category, one student described a home that had the ability to clean its exterior and windows on a regular basis, and another, a teenager's bedroom with a chair that converted to a comfortable bed at night. Many students predicted rooms that cleaned up automatically at a flick of a switch.

Students came up with some useful and some crazy ideas, but in the process they did a great deal of thinking about their choices.

In their letters to their granddaughters, the girls describe their imaginary adult lives—some very ordinary and some quite exotic, such as the dress designer, famous doctor, or movie star. (It's always amazing how many students marry the rock star or movie star of the moment.)

This project has become even more effective and enjoyable as the years go on, in part because each year I have more examples to share from previous classes. When I ask for feedback on this assignment, it is usually positive, and students often ask me if I think what they have predicted will come true.

Since I ask students to present the drawings and explanations from at least one of their two categories in front of the class, this project gives each student a chance to practice and develop talents in writing, art, and speaking.

Kay Hinkebein, Rosary High School, Aurora, Illinois

Putting Rock and Roll into Writing

As a writing teacher, I am always looking for new ideas to get my sixth-grade students interested in the writing process.

One creative way I have found is putting rock and roll into writing, thanks to a conference I attended at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio. (For information, visit the Web site at http://www.rockhall.com or call the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum Education Department at 216-515-1234.)

The conference is for teachers of all subject areas, but participants were able to take specialized workshops focusing on their subject area. I came back from the conference inspired and immediately began planning ways to incorporate music where I felt it would be most appropriate.

For instance, I began the school year by having the students write a paragraph about themselves. This is a standard assignment, but I added to it by asking students to turn in a cassette which had a song or parts of songs on it which they felt related to them, and to include some relevant words or lines from the song in their paragraph. This required students to search for musical pieces to which they felt a special connection, and created additional motivation for the writing assignment.

My writing assignments using music continued throughout the year; some came from the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's Web site (http://www.rockhall.com/programs/), and a few were my own creations.

Short assignments included writing a paragraph comparing and contrasting heroes using Mariah Carey's "'Hero" as an introduction; a paragraph on the American dream using Neil Diamond's "America" as a starter; a process paragraph using the "Hokey Pokey" and Brian

▶

McKnight's "Back at One"; a poetry assignment using Jewel's "Hands"; and a paragraph in which students interpreted a song from the perspective of a visitor from another country.

A slightly longer assignment I created that included a musical element was one focusing on fads. I began the lesson by asking the students to define a fad.

The students' definitions focused on the idea that a fad was something that everyone wants and has to have in order to fit in. I added that a fad can be anything new and popular which becomes a craze, but does not last long. I explained that there are many possibilities for a fad, such as toys, articles of clothing, types of music, types of behavior, and so on. (If time allows, this can also provide a good opportunity for a short class discussion about self-esteem, the universal desire to be accepted, and the pitfalls of trying to fit in at any cost.)

After establishing a definition, we listened to Billy Joel's "It's Still Rock and Roll to Me" (*Glass Houses*, Columbia, 1980). There are other songs that can be used, but I felt this song was appropriate for this lesson. The students had a copy of the lyrics to follow along (You can find these lyrics at http://www.mattsmusicpage.com/billyjoel/lits.txt or by searching www.sing365.com/index.html.)

We discussed the song and talked about its meaning; students generally agreed that the song is saying we should be our own person and do our own thing regardless of what other people think or do.

Then we read a newspaper article that highlighted some of the latest toys and electronic gadgets available. (I used an article entitled "Hot Millennium Finds" by Cathy Collison and Janis Campbell from *The Times Leader* [November 18, 1999], but you should be able to locate other appropriate resources. Spring and fall are good times to collect articles, reviews, and ads on such items, as manufacturers gear up for selling to the summer market and to holiday shoppers.) We discussed whether or not these toys and gadgets are fads, and whether particular items in other areas are fads—such as running shoes with soles that light up; cars with iridescent finishes; new makeup and nail-care products; current slang expressions; and so on.

At this point I described the writing assignment to students. Each student was to select one item that could be considered a fad, decide on whether he or she believed the item to be a fad, and write several paragraphs defending and supporting that position.

A common item that my students chose for this assignment was Power Bead Bracelets. The majority of students felt that they were a fad and compared them to Mood Rings, Friendship Bracelets, and other jewelry fads that may have come and gone over the years. Several students compared current slang expressions to older fads such as "groovy," "far out," and "nifty," and other students tackled trends in apparel such as increasingly thick-soled shoes; huge, baggy pants, and so on.

The writing and discussions served a valuable purpose in getting students to think more critically about peer pressure and about the influence that advertisements and the media have over young people. The musical element wasn't central to the assignment, but it enhanced it in several ways: it helped develop the theme of fads versus individuality; it required listening skills; and it capitalized on the strong connection most middle school students feel with music and their tendency to use music to define and express themselves.

▶

Look for more on the *Classroom Notes Plus* Web Site!

Visit the *Classroom Notes Plus* Web site at www.ncte.org/notesplus to read these articles:

- "Six Features of Effective English Instruction: How Do They Play Out in Middle and High School Classrooms?" by Elizabeth Close (reprinted from *English Update*)
- New on the Poetry Page: three articles from *California English*:
  - "'PTV': The Poetry Video Project" by A. Waller Hastings
  - "Reclaiming the Body: Teaching Modern Poetry" by Tom Hansen
  - "Why I Do Poetry: A Case Study of the Effect of Poetry on a Basic Writer" by Jim Cody
- "Writing to Think Critically: The Seeds of Social Action" by Randy Bomer (reprinted from *Voices from the Middle*)

  Wouldn't it be useful to teach students to develop their own topics and agendas for social action in response to the world they walk through every day? Since writers' notebooks have been so valuable for many of us in helping students develop the habits of mind that lead to the writing of poetry, memoir, fiction, essays, articles, and other writing, they might be useful, too, in bringing a socially critical lens to the lifework of writing.

Exploring the Harlem Renaissance through the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame

I found the "Teacher Talk" section regarding Web sites for the Harlem Renaissance (CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS, August 2000) extremely useful. I'd like to add a site that no one mentioned for incorporating music into the study of the Harlem Renaissance and other topics.

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio, has a terrific Web site which includes, among other things, more than 50 lesson plans for teachers. Some sample topics: #3—Langston Hughes and the Blues, #2—Pop Music & the Civil Rights Movement, #55—"'And I Still Rise'": Proud Black Women: Understanding the Poetry of Maya Angelou through Lyrics of Two Female Rappers."

http://www.rockhall.com

Click on "enter" and then click on "programs." Once on the "programs" page, you will find resources for teachers, students, etc. It's a terrific site.

Gina Corsun
kengina@idt.net

As I began using music with this lesson and the others, I did have a few reservations. How could I use music in a middle school classroom that was at times already loud and distracting? Would the students make the connections I wanted with the songs I was using, especially when the songs were older, not current, hits? But I found that these were not problems—students learned to quiet down in order to hear the music, and most students were able to both appreciate and respect music from different time periods, genres, and cultures.

If you're interested in getting more ideas on using music in your classroom, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's Web site is a good place to start, but if you take the time to search the Web, you'll be amazed with what you find and how it can help you when you teach writing.

Cecelia A. Murphy, Mountaintop, Pennsylvania

Getting the Move On: Revision in the Computer Lab

When it's time to revise, do your students dive in to their essays, welcoming the chance to rearrange, refine, rewrite? Neither do ours. Since kids tend to believe their own essays are flawless, we developed revision activities that allow them to read other students' writing, suggest alternatives, and collect different perspectives on their own writing. Several of the activities also provide "teachable moments" for reviewing topics like appositives, transitions, dialog punctuation, and so on.

Before the round of revisions

- In order to preserve the writer's original, all revisions are done on a copy or duplicate of the original file. [The procedure to copy a file depend on your particular word processing software.]

- The writer removes his/her name to create a degree of anonymity.

- The general procedures (revise, save, move, receive new instructions, repeat the cycle) that students will follow throughout the revision session are reviewed.

- Depending on the selected activity, the writer or the reviser may need additional instructions.

During the round of revisions

- Students move to a different computer for each activity. Teacher cues the movement to avoid chaos. The style of the class and the teacher will determine how to direct the movement—by voice, bell, etc.

- The teacher explains the goal for this revision activity. Revisions will be easier to identify if they look different from the original text (bold, italics, underlined, color). TIP: to keep students focused on the revision instead of the format choices, the teacher should **assign** the format change for each activity.

- Reviser reads the essay and makes the revision.

- Revisers only add to the original; they never delete.

- Each reviser initials his or her modifications.

- The reviser saves the changes before moving to a new computer. Generally, students can complete four to five revision activities during a 45-minute period.

After the round of revisions

- All students return to their own essays to review the revisions. It's important that students evaluate the revisions. One strategy is to have the original writer select at least one revision worth keeping and explain how it would affect the essay. ▶

Here is a selection of revision activities to get you started. Use as is or mix and match.

Adding to the Original

- a simile or metaphor to an action verb ("like a ________")
- two different background sounds for the setting
- an allusion to a literary work or character studied during the course
- two different titles (use alliteration for one? a phrase from the story?)

Sharpening the Picture

- Replace an everyday verb with a more precise action verb (for example, replace "said" with "mumbled," "yelled," "snarled," etc.).
- Add a detail that describes texture or temperature or a physical sensation (sweat, muscles knotting, etc.).
- Change a sentence with a "be" verb (is, are, was, were) into a sentence with action.

Trying Out Transitions

- Add or highlight a transitional word or phrase.
- Add or highlight a phrase that identifies the importance of the idea that follows.
- Add a question to link the ideas in two sentences (Why did this happen? How did she react?).

Styling Sentences

- Move a prepositional phrase to the beginning of a sentence (in such a way that your new version still sounds right).
- Combine two short sentences using an appositive ("Maurice, the terror of every babysitter, . . . ").
- Find a sentence that mentions *time* (then, now, etc.) or sequence. Rewrite the sentence so that the new sentence starts with "When" or "After" or "While." You may have to add ideas. Here's what the new version will look like: **"When** the vampire leaned toward her lovely neck, she punched him." Or **"While** Romeo tried to avoid fighting Tybalt, Mercutio splashed in the fountain."

Dramatizing the Detail

- Change one fact or statement so that the same information is communicated in the form of dialogue.
- Change an adjective about a character into a scene that shows that trait in action.

This second set of activities requires more essay preparation from the writer before the revision begins. These are more challenging revision activities—you may find that only one activity per period can be completed.

Unscrambling a Paragraph

Writer removes the first and last sentences of one paragraph, then scrambles the order of all remaining sentences, leaving no clues to the original order.

Reviser unscrambles the sentences, relying on transitional devices as clues.

Reviser creates an opening and a closing sentence for the newly unscrambled paragraph.

Suggesting an Introduction

Writer removes everything except the first body paragraph.

Reviser suggests two specific and different ways to introduce the topic (quotation, "what's in it for me" appeal, startling statistic, etc.)

Reviser creates an introductory paragraph using one (or both) of the suggestions.

Rebuilding the Thesis

(The next two activities work well together.)

Writer removes everything except the first sentence of every body paragraph.

Reviser reads all the sentences and writes out a statement of the thesis or main idea.

Filling in the Middle

Writer removes everything except the first sentence of every body paragraph.

Reviser lists five to ten questions that he/she expects the paragraph to answer.

Organizing for Effect

Writer lists the details (description), examples or points (exposition), reasons (argument/persuasion), or incidents (narrative) in the order that they appear in the essay.

Reviser rearranges the items into a different order and explains why it might be effective.

Why do we—and our students—enjoy this change of pace? It's active: students move from one station to another. It's specific: each round has a task to complete. It's safe: the original file is untouched, the writer is anonymous, the revisions are just alternatives. It's sound: these are strategies for evaluation and change, not error-hunts. It's enlightening: students get a chance to see what others wrote; they also get other perspectives on their own writing.

Jim Lonergan and Donna-Marie Stupple, Maine Township High Schools, Park Ridge, Illinois

TEACHER TALK

How Do You Help Students Recognize Style and Voice?

What definition of style and voice do you give your students? How do you help them recognize it in a piece of writing (and therefore be able to use it themselves)? My tenth graders are beginning personal narratives, and I could use any available help with this.

Cheryl Duckworth
cherylynn1@erols.com

Probably the way I find it works best is by selecting some literature and reading it, coming to understand style and voice that way. Shakespeare's classic passages always work. Saki, e. e. cummings, Frost, Montaigne, O'Henry, and Poe come to mind. We generate the definitions by examining the literature. I also like talking about grammar conventions at this time with students because the grammar patterns begin to emerge as ways in which style and voice are transmitted by the author.

Ted Nellen
tnellen@iris.host4u.net

I like Ted's answer. The best way to get your students to understand voice is to read selected passages by a variety of authors (particularly from personal narratives). Then ask the students how they can detect what the author is like by the way she/he speaks, and whether or not they like listening to that author.

I also maintain that you can't talk about voice without talking about audience. Ask your students what assumptions the author may be making about her/his audience. This practically always influences "voice." Ask your students if they use the same "voice" when talking to different audiences. (I know this overlaps into "diction," but that's a part of voice as well). I tell students that when I read some student papers, it doesn't sound like human beings wrote them. It sounds like a machine programmed to do schoolwork. There is no personality. It is lobotomized writing.

"If you want to improve your voice," I tell them, "say things in ways that will get your reader to smile, frown, get angry, jump up, or look away in deep thought." As writer Italo Calvino says, "I want my reader to have fun." The bottom line is what Voltaire said, "Any style that is not boring is a good one."

Lind Williams
LINDW@provo.k12.ut.us

Voice is so important to good writing. So often it is taken out of kids' writing because of teachers insisting that students not use "I" and take on the formal, distant, cold, impersonal voice of authority. I tell my kids I want it to sound like them telling the story, so I could guess who wrote it without looking at the name. I sometimes have them actually tell it out loud and have someone take notes or have them take notes as they tell it. I have known people to use tape recorders for this.

I use examples from good writing. Most memoirists have a real gift for this—James McBride in *The Color of Water* writes: "When I was fourteen, my mother took up two new hobbies: riding a bicycle and playing piano. The piano I didn't mind, but the bicycle drove me crazy." The syntax of that second sentence is so much more voice than writing. Amy Tan in *The Joy Luck Club* is excellent. A short piece by Sandra Cisneros, "Eleven," is excellent. Actually, anything by Cisneros is good. I use examples from the kids' writing. Invariably a kid will tell a story about eating dinner and slip in something like "I reached for my utensils . . ." and as soon as you point it out, they get it.

Donald Murray in *Write to Learn* has a lot of good stuff on voice. It seems like an elusive quality of writing to teach, but well worth it.

Lori Mayo
Lmayo1@aol.com

I'm going to jump in and agree with Lori. The students need something contemporary as a model. In connection with voice and personal narrative, I usually use just about any vignette (or several) from *House on Mango Street*. I also like Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Having said that, I believe Virginia Woolf wrote an excellent essay "Leslie Stephen" in which she talks about the advice her father gives her about writing. Students will notice that when they follow her dad's advice, they will be using "I" less frequently.

Michelle Garbis
mirehol@netrox.net

You really can't teach voice from a play. A play's many voices are its characters, which change throughout, depending on conflict and rising action. Thus, you are teaching character, not narrative voice, which may belong to a character in the story or not, depending on point of view. The playwright has defined that character's personality carefully, and the actor is obligated to play it as the author wrote it—

▶

Classroom Solutions

Custodians and Keys

My organizational tip # 1 for any classroom: Get to know your school's maintenance people. They are the first to know when a teacher is throwing out a file cabinet that has one drawer not working, yet you can still use the other three.

Some teachers in special programs receive money for equipment and have to throw out some good stuff to make room. Get your hands on some of those file cabinets!

Bob Leslie (who has about 10 file cabinets in his room)

bobo54t@hotmail.com

Bob's advice is an often-overlooked gold mine. The custodial staff also know about the secret, dusty storage areas where old furniture and materials go to die. I have one question, Bob. Do your 10 file cabinets have keys?

I've encountered many a cabinet with the whole lock mechanism drilled out because a teacher left with a key. There isn't a key to any desk, cabinet, or file drawer in my building that I know of. I'm lucky to have a key to the door.

Mary Filak

Shatzie2@aol.com

Did you know that getting replacement locks for the file cabinets is easy once the old one has been drilled out? I think the locks cost under $5.00 with two keys and are easy to install.

Cindy Adams

cellen2@aol.com

given individual interpretations: two very different areas of discussion.

Voice is the narrative persona taken on by the author and may be how he gets his tone across to the reader. Style is related to his purpose and audience.

Here's an exercise that I cribbed from a NOTES PLUS several years ago. Have students pick various well-known fairy tales and tell the story from the perspective of one of the characters. For instance, *CINDERELLA* as told by the prince or one of the sisters. *LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD* as told by the wolf, etc. Vary the audience—tell it to a room full of accountants, or bored adolescents, or the Queen of England. Look at how the story changes in language levels, sentence structure, focus, and tone, depending on who is telling it and to whom it is being told. Now you're looking at style and voice.

Peggy Smith
Psmith@staff.chuh.org

The Writing Checklist: An Easy Way to Review Grammar

Sometimes it seems that English teachers are supposed to teach everything. They are responsible for students learning all of the nuances of the language, its finer punctuation, and how to think critically not only about literature but also about the world. I have found a way to include three- to five-minute grammar lessons and to reinforce editing skills that I find works with my ninth-grade students.

At the beginning of the school year when I return students' first writing assignment, I spend a few minutes having students set up a Writer's Checklist in their notebooks. I go over, at the most, three or four errors that occurred in a substantial number of their papers. The list is almost the same each year.

The first problem is always titles. I spend two or three minutes discussing why it's important to title papers—how it helps the writer focus on the main point and create an expectation in the reader—and I suggest two possible styles for essay titles: "informative" and "catchy." I ask students to start their checklist by writing, "1. Title: use one." They may also add any other notes they find helpful from our discussion. ▶

Tips

Where can you publish student writing?

You can introduce your students to the publication process by checking out these resources that compile information on how and when to submit what to whom.

CHILDREN'S WRITER'S & ILLUSTRATOR'S MARKET
edited by Alice Pope

Published by Writer's Digest Books, 2000. This book contains information about where to send work and advice on how to be published. There is also a special section for student writers. For more information, visit http://www.writersdigest.com/, call 800/333-0133, or write to P.O. Box 2123, Harlan, IA 51593.

GO PUBLIC! ENCOURAGING STUDENT WRITERS TO PUBLISH
by Susanne Rubenstein

Published by the National Council of Teachers of English. For middle and high school teachers who are committed to process-writing and eager to encourage their students in the last step of the process—publication. It offers specific writing ideas and classroom activities and features an extensive list of commercial markets and writing contests open to young writers. For more information, contact the NCTE Customer Service Department toll-free at 877-369-6283 or fax your request to 217-328-9645.

A few of the ideas listed in these books, or available via a Web search, are the following:

MERLYN'S PEN: FICTION, ESSAYS, AND POEMS BY AMERICA'S TEENS

Publishes writing (no artwork) from students in grades 6 through 12 in the annual MERLYN'S PEN MAGAZINE and the AMERICAN TEEN WRITER BOOK SERIES. Submissions must be mailed and must contain the official MERLYN'S PEN cover sheet. For more information (and the cover sheet), visit http://www.merlynspen.com, call 800/247-2027, or write to P.O. Box 910 East Greenwich, RI 02818-0910.

SKIPPING STONES: A MULTICULTURAL CHILDREN'S MAGAZINE

Publishes writing from all ages and in all languages; readers are generally ages 8 to 16 and from diverse cultural and socioeconomical backgrounds. Original illustrations, artwork, and photos are encouraged. For more information, visit http://www.efn.org/~skipping/, call 541/342-4956, or write to P.O. Box 3939, Eugene, OR 97403-0939.

WORD DANCE MAGAZINE

Publishes writing (essays, stories, poetry) and artwork of students in kindergarten through eighth grade. Submissions must be mailed and must include the WORD DANCE submission form. For more information (and the submission form), visit http://www.worddance.com, call 800-378-8815, or write to Playful Productions, Inc., P.O. Box 10804, Wilmington, DE 19850-0804.

An error that most students have problems with at first, but which is usually soon eliminated, is the run-on or comma splice. Grammar books say a run-on is a case in which two independent clauses are joined with no punctuation and a comma splice is a case where two independent clauses are joined only by a comma. I may define it differently than a grammar book, but I tell my students that a run-on sentence happens when you stick two sentences together with nothing in between, and a comma splice happens when you stick two sentences together with only a comma in between.

I suggest that students keep an eye out for these problems, and I demonstrate three ways to avoid them: start a new sentence; use a semi-colon to connect the two sentences; or use a comma with a conjunction such as "and" or "but." I encourage students to try semi-colons even if they use them incorrectly at first. Later when I suggest a form for comparison/contrast, I emphasize the semi-colon again with this example: Romeo is a Montague; Juliet is a Capulet.

Every time I return an essay to the students I ask them to add two or three new items to their checklist. And with each essay they write, I remind them to avoid "checklist errors"—to proofread using the checklist. By the end of the first trimester, students have usually added about 15 items to their lists, and by the end of the second trimester they have about 25 items. Part of our final exam is always to write an essay, and I hold students responsible not only for having their checklist with them but for using it to proofread their writing.

Does this method work? It is always difficult to measure success, but it seems to help my students focus on and eliminate

▶

the most common errors. They correct all errors on their papers before they put them in their portfolios, but they lose points if the errors on the checklist reappear in their papers.

I don't have all of the same students for the second trimester. I give new students a copy of the checklist errors we have reviewed first trimester, but I don't spend time going over them. Next year I may have new students pair up with returning students and let them teach the concepts. I do think I notice a difference; during the second trimester, the students who used the checklist during the first trimester have fewer errors than the students who just joined the class.

The following is a sample checklist from our first trimester:

Writing Checklist

1. Title: use one
2. Stick to 1st person; avoid pronoun shifts and 2nd person "you."
3. Avoid one- and two-sentence paragraphs (except with dialogue).
4. Know the difference between "than" and "then." Than = a comparison. Then = a time.
5. Don't overuse "I believe" and "I think."
6. PROOFREAD.
7. In an essay about a book, include the title and the author (usually in the first paragraph).
8. Use underline (or italics) for the titles of novels, magazines, newspapers, anthologies, ships, movies, and plays. Use quotation marks for poems, songs, magazine and newspaper articles, and short stories.
9. Use correct documentation: "——(16). Use single quotation marks for quoted material inside double quotation marks: "Say 'I love you' one more time."
10. Repeat key words from the thesis statement in the conclusion and in the body of an essay.
11. Don't overuse "very," "really," "a lot" or "interesting."
12. Remember the difference between its and it's. Its = possession. It's = it is.
13. Put commas and periods inside the quotation marks: "Tell her you are sorry," said the teacher.
14. Look for run-on sentences and comma splices and punctuate them correctly. Make the sentence into two sentences, add a semi-colon, or use a comma and a conjunction.
15. Agreement: Check to be sure pronouns and verbs agree.

Pamela J. Orth, San Luis Obispo High School, San Luis Obispo, California

FOCUS ON MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Deepening the Meaning of Heritage Months

Does your school celebrate Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, and Women's History Month?

If so, scheduling performers and speakers for the assemblies, finding volunteers to score the student essays, and planning the special menus for the cafeteria probably take every minute you can squeeze out of your already overloaded schedule. But to make these efforts worthwhile, we need to take the time to evaluate the impact of these events.

If our goal is to entertain students, then an enthusiastic response to the assemblies will signify success. If our goal is to meet a district requirement, then we simply have to host a sufficient number of events. But if our goal is to challenge stereotypes—creating an inclusive curriculum and addressing institutional racism—then we need to reexamine our overall plan.

Ironically, typical heritage month programs may do as much to reinforce stereotypes as they do to challenge them.

For example, what do students learn if the Hispanic Heritage Month events consist of a dance performance assembly and tacos for lunch? Try asking students at your school what they have learned from the activities. Don't be surprised if they tell you that "Latinos like to dance and eat." The heritage month events have simply reinforced a stereotype that students have already learned from television.

What do students learn if every year they have to write a report on the same few African Americans? They will learn forever the names of Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King, Jr., Frederick Douglas, and Rosa Parks. But they are also probably left to assume that these black men and women must be exceptions.

A Revised Approach

I'm not suggesting that we do away with heritage celebrations. It is important to devote special attention to previously marginalized histories. However, special events in isolation can reinforce stereotypes. Instead, we can challenge ourselves to go deeper. In the same way that educational reform has recognized the benefit of instruction that is holistic and interdisciplinary, a similar approach is called for in addressing cultural heritage. Consider the following points when planning heritage events for your school.

Develop learning objectives. Too often we skip this step

▶

and go directly to drawing up a list of possible presenters. In developing the learning objectives, ask members of that particular ethnic, racial, or gender group what they would like their peers to understand about their heritage and what aspects of their culture and heritage they would like to explore themselves. This step is worthwhile, even if members of the group are on the planning committee. The broader school community should provide input about what and how stereotypes should be addressed.

Recognize the diversity that exists within the United States and Canada. Often schools with diverse populations will hold International Festivals. Everyone brings a food or shares a tradition from his or her heritage. Using the term "international" gives the impression that the dishes and traditions are foreign to the United States or Canada. Yet the fact that everyone bringing something lives in North America means that the foods and traditions actually reflect domestic cultural diversity. Continue to hold the festival, but change the name to, for example, "Heritage Festivals" or "Cultural Traditions Festival."

Similarly, Latinos and Asian Americans are often introduced as immigrant or international cultures. In reality, Latinos arrived on this continent before the Pilgrims, and Asian Americans have played a major role in U.S. history for more than 150 years.

Address the values, history, current reality, and power relationships that shape a culture. Heritage months frequently feature the crafts, music, and food of specific cultures. These are important expressions of culture. However, in isolation they mask the obstacles that people of color have faced, how they have confronted those obstacles, the great diversity within any cultural group, and the current reality of people in the United States. Invite representatives from local advocacy groups to make presentations or to assist you in identifying curricular resources. Look for ways to present the complexity and diversity that exist within any culture. For example, do the images in your school of Latinos include Latinos of African or Asian heritage? The catalog *Teaching for Change* is full of useful books, videos, and CD-ROMs (www.teachingforchange.org).

Learn about food and dance in context. Don't ban all potlucks and dance performances—just make them more meaningful. Have students or teachers interview parents about the dishes they plan to prepare. That is, instead of collecting just recipes, collect stories. Ask parents how they learned to make the dish and what they remember about the person who taught them or the experience. Have your pencil or tape recorder ready because the stories will flow. These cultural texts can be posted next to the dishes at the dinner or bound into a classroom reader. Any study of foods can also include an examination of the roots of hunger, as presented in the high school curriculum *Finding Solutions to Hunger: A Hunger Program for Middle and Upper School Students* (Kempf, 1997).

In a similar way, students can interview guest dancers or musicians about the stories behind their performances. Students can read examples of how the life of an artist can be placed in context in the children's books *In My Heart, I Am a Dancer* (Yin, 1996) and *The Piñata Maker* (Ancona, 1994).

Include all the Americas. Heritage months provide a meaningful opportunity to explore the relationship of U.S. history to the history of all the Americas. For example, during Black History Month, students can learn about the only country in the Americas to become free from colonialism and slavery at the same time—Haiti; see *Teaching About Haiti* (Sunshine & Menkart, 1994). They can read the words of Marcus Garvey, who spoke of the brotherhood of blacks throughout the Americas. Women's History Month offers an opportunity to learn about women's groups in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Canada, such as the Mothers of the Disappeared in Argentina.

Portray Native Americans in the present. Curricular units on Native Americans are rife with stereotypes, including the false beliefs that they were all alike—with feathers and teepees—and that they are now a "vanished race." No wonder Native peoples receive so little support in their cur-

▶

Classroom Solutions

Late-Work Tickets

I have little one-quarter-page sheets of paper I call "late-work tickets." I made one sheet of four tickets on regular paper and then cut them up. I copy them on yellow paper so they stand out in a sea of papers. Students fill them out with the original due date, actual turn-in date, name of assignment, and an explanation of the reason for the assignment being turned in late. I won't grade work handed in after due dates without a ticket. This helps me remember what I'm grading when an assignment comes in out of order, it makes students accountable, and it provides interesting information for parent/student discussions at times!

Sandra Moore
toby@whidbey.net

rent struggles to maintain land and language: most people in the United States are barely aware of their existence. The traditional curriculum may move children to sympathize with the Native peoples in the past and even to imagine that if they had been among the early European settlers, they would have defended Native rights. Meanwhile, students are oblivious to the fact that Native Americans continue to be removed from their lands and that contemporary opportunities to defend those rights are available.

Students can also learn about Native people throughout the Americas—Canada, the United States, Mexico, Central America, and South America. Useful films include *INCIDENT AT OGLALA* (Apted, 1991) and *BROKEN RAINBOW* (Earthworks, 1985). *I, RIGOBERTA MENCHU* (Burgos-Debray, 1984), the biography of the Nobel Prize winner, presents a detailed description of Mayan culture and the injustices faced by Mayan people today.

Introduce leaders in the context of their organizations. Children are given the false impression that great people make history all on their own. Instead of serving as inspiration, the heroes are portrayed as superhuman. Children cannot picture themselves in this history. Instead, we can teach about organized movements for change. For example, when learning about Rosa Parks, students can also learn about the Montgomery bus boycott. When learning about Martin Luther King Jr., they can learn about his role in the sanitation workers strike; see the video *AT THE RIVER I STAND* (Appleby, Graham, & Ross, 1993). Children have to learn from history how change really happens if the curriculum is to serve as a tool for them to build their future.

Examine the overall school curriculum. When Carter J. Woodson initiated a week-long celebration of Negro history in 1926, he intended to build on the full year's curriculum. Ask yourselves, Is Black History Month a celebration of an integrated curriculum, or are we squeezing all black history lessons into February? If the content of the overall curriculum is largely Eurocentric, we can assume that students still learn that whites are most important and that everyone else plays a superficial role.

To transform the curriculum, teachers need to broaden their own understanding of U.S. history, literature, and identity. Your school can honor each heritage month by providing release time for a group of adults to read and discuss a book on that culture's history. Invite teachers, other school staff, parents, and members of the community to participate. When the school system's central administration asks for a report on the activities held to honor black or Hispanic heritage, explain that you held fewer assemblies and instead laid the groundwork for staff to revise the year-long curriculum. Such books as *A DIFFERENT MIRROR* (Takaki, 1993), *BEFORE THE MAYFLOWER* (Bennett, 1987), *OCCUPIED AMERICA* (Acuna, 1988), and *A PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES* (Zinn, 1995) are ideal for study and discussion groups.

Examine the school's policies. Heritage month events are often used to divert attention from inequities in a school's policies. Heritage month posters in the hallways feature African American and Latino leaders, but a disproportionate number of black and Latino children are suspended each week. Heritage month greetings are spoken in multiple languages during the morning announcements, but no effort is made to help children to maintain their native language. Parents are asked to bring in traditional dishes for their respective heritage month, but their lives and their knowledge are never connected to the curriculum.

Instead, each heritage month could be honored by the formation of a student-parent-teacher task force whose mission would be to take a serious look at the experience of the respective group in school and to make recommendations for improvement. ▶

Would We Confine Studying Lincoln and Washington to February?

I'm doing an ongoing semester-long poetry notebook in which students compile three poems a month—two that they've written and one that they find.

I'll be focusing on African American poets this month. But it shouldn't be confined to a month. The study of multicultural authors needs to be worked into the permanent curriculum. I've been bringing in poetry and short stories from many cultural groups over the year.

I think it is sad that people wondered why another teacher and I planned a Martin Luther King, Jr., essay contest during January. Why can't we have an essay contest about him or any other prominent figure outside of Black History Month? Do we have to study women only during March? Would we confine studying Lincoln and Washington to February?

Diane M. Ichikawa
dmichikawa@earthlink.net

Do you have good ideas for teaching works by multicultural authors throughout the year? Send them to CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS, *1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801-1096, or send them via e-mail to* notesplus@ncte.org.

Some people argue, from the left and from the right, that we should not even have heritage months. But until women and people of color are fairly represented all year long in all subject areas, and are provided an equitable education, we need to pay special attention to these goals.

Heritage months are opportunities to celebrate our achievements to date and to ensure that we will have a lot more to celebrate in the future. It is not a question of whether to have heritage months, but rather how to use that time.

Will we hold superficial events to make the school look good, or will we dig deeper to create a strong and equitable foundation for the future?

Will we hold some superficial events to make the school look good, or will we dig deeper to create a strong and equitable foundation for the future?

References

Occupied America: A History of Chicanos (3rd ed.) by R. Acuna. HarperCollins (1998).

The Piñata Maker/El Piñatero by G. Ancona. Harcourt Brace (1994).

At the River I Stand [Film], directed by D. Appleby, A. Graham, and S. Ross. (1993). Available from California Newsreel, 149 Ninth St., San Francisco, CA 94103.

Incident at Oglala [Film], directed by M. Apted. (1991).

Before the Mayflower: A History of Black America (6th ed.) by L. Bennett, Jr. (Penguin Books, 1987).

I, Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala, edited by E. Burgos-Debray. (Verso, 1984).

Broken Rainbow [Film], produced by Earthworks. (1985). (Available from Direct Cinema Limited, 800-525-0000).

Finding Solutions to Hunger: A Sourcebook for Middle and Upper School Teachers by S. Kempf. (World Hunger Year, 1997).

Teaching about Haiti (3rd ed.), edited by C. Sunshine and D. Menkart. (Network of the Educators on the Americas, 1994).

A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America by R. Takaki. (Little, Brown, 1993).

In My Heart, I Am a Dancer by C. Yin. (Folklore Project, 1996).

A People's History of the United States: 1492-present by H. Zinn. (HarperCollins, 1995).

Deborah J. Menkart is director of the Network of Educators on the Americas, P. O. Box 73038, Washington, DC 20056-3038 (e-mail NECADC@aol com).

Reprinted with permission from Educational Leadership (April 1999), the journal of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

TRACI'S LISTS OF TEN

Ten Ways to Play with Literature

"Traci's Lists of Ten" are lists of thoughtful teaching tips created by Traci Gardner, a former English teacher and now Online Resources Manager for NCTE. To read more of Traci's Lists of Ten, visit http://www.ncte.org/traci/tens.

I get tired of cardboard essays on literature that we're reading—those general and uninteresting five-paragraph themes that are as boring to the students as they are to me. One way that I've found to get around these flat essays is by assigning paper and discussion topics that don't lend themselves easily to the five-paragraph theme but that still encourage critical and analytical thinking.

There are two parts to each of these ideas, but I'm only listing the first part below since the second part is the same for every essay. First, writers consider the work from some unusual perspective, producing a text of some kind. Second, I ask them to add a reflective piece that explains the choices that they have made in their essay. It's not enough simply to write the papers below—they have to explain the interpretation and analysis of the piece of literature that led to the ideas in their writing.

1. Have a character in a reading or the author of a piece endorse a product—design a letter or short narrative where the character or author tells readers why the product is one they should purchase or support. With all the celebrity endorsements in mass media today, this assignment is fairly easy to set up. Students have to think carefully about the endorsement—it has to fit the character's or author's knowledge, and it has to be a product or service that the character or author would be likely to endorse. It makes sense for Huck Finn to endorse a travel agency, for instance, or a particular kind of boat—or a brand of white paint. He'd be less convincing, however, endorsing denture cream. ▶

2. Begin a class discussion by asking students to brainstorm silently, completing at least three "what if's" for their reading.

For *A Raisin in the Sun*, for example, students might write questions such as "What if Willy had shown up at the train station and he and Walter Lee had gone to Springfield?" or "What if Ruth weren't pregnant?"

After they brainstorm, have them share their "what if's" via a chalkboard, poster paper, or, for those with computer classrooms, in a shared space online. Once the "what if's" are gathered, have students look for similarities—Are there questions that occur repeatedly? Can they be divided into categories—perhaps by the character they refer to or the plausibility of the question?

Finally, writers choose one of the questions and write a narrative answering it. Alternately, students might participate in a group discussion of three or four of the questions that appear most frequently.

3. Consider a piece of literature from a different cultural perspective. This assignment works best for me after I've done some work with fairy tales from different countries—I have several versions of *Cinderella* from different cultures.

As a next step, students rewrite something they've read—usually a short, short story—from a different perspective. In ESL classes, you can have students rewrite American tall tales and Uncle Remus stories from the perspective of their native culture. Students might write narratives or even script scenes.

4. Translate a section of something you've read into another style. This assignment does double duty—helping you talk about writing style and analyzing the events that occur in the reading.

Students might read Russell Baker's "Little Red Riding Hood Revisited" as an example. It's often more successful to work with a story that they know well—having them translate a fairy tale, for instance, into a jargon-filled version as Baker has.

But they need not stop there—if you're working with Shakespeare, you might have students modernize a passage to "standard," modern version. Or get experimental, and have them write a rap version or an exaggerated and flowery version.

To add fun, have students work on different passages (as groups perhaps); then, share the results and have them guess what the original passages were.

5. One fun exercise is to ask students to think through the "movie version" of a piece they've read recently. There are several ways to set up the writing for this project: students might write individual pieces outlining how they would produce their movie version, groups might work together to outline their production plan, or students might actually script a section of their version.

What makes the assignment the most fun is having students work with a range of kinds of movies for the same reading. You can set up several small groups—one does the "big Hollywood blockbuster" version, another does the "Disney" Version, yet another works on the "PBS/Merchant Ivory" version, and a fourth might work on the "made-for-TV" version. They choose actors, settings, and so forth. Once they've worked out their versions, you can have them share—then compare and contrast the productions.

6. Another way to ask students to consider different perspectives on a piece they've read is to ask them to write a newspaper report of the events that occurred in the reading.

You can ask all students to write the same kind of newspaper report, or mix it up by letting them choose among several options. They can discuss the differences between a newspaper report on the events in *The Scarlet Letter* today and those that would have been included in the report written in a newspaper at the time. You can add a twist to the assignment by letting them write the *National Enquirer* version, the *Entertainment Tonight* version, and so on.

7. Write a letter to the author of the work or to a character in the piece. This assignment is pretty standard, but you can make it livelier if you play with it.

Try combining the letter assignment with the "What if" assignment (#1)—asking students to write to the author about how they think the story might have been different. Or you can have students give the author or character advice—You might have your students set themselves up as advice columnists for a newspaper who respond to characters in their reading.

A two-part assignment could have students first assume the role of a character in the piece who writes a letter to an advice columnist; then, they exchange papers and assume the role of the advice columnist by responding to their classmates' letters.

Another possibility is having students assume the role of the character in the reading; then have that character write to the author (or vice versa).

8. Have students choose a scene that isn't included in the reading and write their version of the events that might happen. Students can concentrate on events that are referred to but aren't explored in the piece; or you can have them focus on a time period that passes without comment. What happened the night before the events that open *A Raisin in the Sun*? Describe a scene from either Othello's or Desdemona's childhood—that is, before they met. What happened before Mr. Mallard went to work in "The Story of an Hour"?

9. If you're also teaching technical or business writing, have students write a resume for a character in a story they have read. ▶

Students can check a current newspaper for job listings, find a job that their character qualifies for, and write the resume or letter of application that shows that their character is the best one for the job. The exercise asks students to analyze their characters carefully, looking for all the skills and know-how that they demonstrate. And at the same time, it gives them a chance to think about how to cast the characters' experiences so that they support the implicit argument that the character is the best one for the job. Working with characters' who have no given job can be best—concentrating on the kind of job Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer might apply for allows more creativity than writing a resume to help Willy Loman get a new job. You'll get 99 percent sales applications for Willy, and students won't work far beyond the "known" details. With characters such as Huck and Tom, they have to do more analytical thinking.

10. Where will the characters be in 20 years? A series of invention questions can help students think about the range of options.

The specific questions depend upon the story you're working with, of course. A brief piece such as Gwendolyn Brooks's "We Real Cool" can work well because it gives students a lot of room. For Brooks's poem, you might ask students to answer questions such as these: Did the character you've chosen get married? Go to school? End up in jail? Do they really "Die soon"? What might happen if they dropped by the Golden Shovel 20 years later—What has happened to the place?

Once students think through their characters' experiences, they can write a narrative, a letter to another character, or perhaps something such as an address to their high school class at the 20-Year Reunion.

Traci Gardner is NCTE Online Resources manager.

TEACHER TALK

Suggestions for Working with Students with Disabilities

I just found out that my English class this year will include a student with severe physical disabilities, who will be traveling throughout the day with an aide. I guess I'm a bit apprehensive. Has anyone ever had a situation like this? I'd appreciate it if any of you could share some of your experiences on this topic.

I'd like this young man to feel as comfortable and accepted as possible, but I don't know where to start. Thanks.

Bonnie Littleton
bonnie@marist.marist.net

I've had several students with aides in my classes and found the experience most rewarding. Before the students arrived, I conferred with the counselors to see if they had IEP's (individualized education plans containing a specialized education student's goals for the year) and with English teachers from previous years to see what techniques or physical arrangements had worked well for them.

I also discussed in detail my plans for each of the marking periods, sharing with the aide the kinds of assignments we would be doing. Ahead of time, I knew which activities would be difficult and then could plan accordingly to make accommodations.

One eighth-grade student who had cerebral palsy had an aide who used to do almost everything for her. With lots of effort at first, I learned to decipher her almost illegible writing (she loved to write) and after the first weeks, asked the aide not to come to class except when we were having special craft projects or other activities requiring special help. We all took turns helping this student with her books, etc., and she was just one of us.

We were together again for her ninth-grade year, and we had another wonderful year. She comes back regularly to visit and is now entering her sophomore year in college.

My students with physical disabilities added so much to our classes, and I grew so much by contact with them. Get to know your student, make adjustments when necessary, and enjoy him as you enjoy your other students.

Mary-Sue Gardetto
gardetto@erinet.com

What's the student's disability? Can you meet before school opens with the aide and the student?

Certainly a careful look at the student's IEP to see what his goals for the year are and his 504 plan to see what physical adjustments must be accounted for would be essential in any plan to include him in the day-to-day flow of the class.

Have you spoken to his parents? The special education coordinator? All of these resources will give you information

▶

that you can use to make the transition as smooth as possible for everyone.

Peggy Smith
Psmith@staff.chuh.edu

A few years ago a student with cerebral palsy was assigned to my class. He had great difficulty with movement and even greater difficulty with speech, but my, was he a bright button! I met with him before classes began and asked what I could do in the classroom to ensure his learning comfort (and that of the other members of our class). I then met with the other students and shared with them the imminent arrival of our new classmate. Everyone in the class warmed to his sense of humor and his dedication.

He wondered how he would manage presentations. I asked him if he'd be okay with other members of his group reading his literary findings—in other words, he'd have to do the research and written work for peers to share with the class. It worked beautifully. I recall for his independent novel readings he chose the autobiographies of Christie Brown and Helen Keller. When his presentation was shared with the class, via his group members, we were impressed.

Noeline Laccetti
laccetti@idirect.com

Let me tell you about one of the best students I have ever had. Derrick is bound to a wheelchair due to a shooting in his neighborhood in which he was struck by a stray bullet. It messed up his spinal cord. He is, quite simply, one of the best, brightest, and funniest students I have ever had the joy to have in class.

He wrote a very compelling short story about the whole experience, and he has one of the most positive attitudes I have ever witnessed in a person. A case in point—I would not repeat this joke except in this context—is the following: Derrick said to me one day before class began: "What's the difference between O.J. Simpson and a guy in a wheelchair?" (He told me this during the height of the OJ trial.) Answer: "O.J.'s gonna walk."

To me, that joke spoke volumes. On the one hand, Derrick is healthy enough to laugh at his own absurd and tragic predicament. On the other, I felt the heaviness—if only for a moment—of the tremendous burden he must live with for the rest of his life. And yet, he perseveres, even driving his motorized wheelchair in the rain to get to school.

He is majoring in English and secondary education so he can teach high school English. He is an inspiration to me, so I know he'll be an inspiration to his students. A picture of him is on my Web site at www.writingbydesign.net. Just click on the "ISD" link when you get there and scroll down the page.

I wish I had a million Derricks in my class.

James Armstrong
ja7@i-c.net

I urge you to review this student's IEP as soon as possible. The case manager for the student should be able to walk you through it (if you're unfamiliar). This will give you assistance in preparing for the needs of that student. Remember, the IEP is a legal document and the student must receive all the accommodations/modifications that are written.

Patricia Coleman
Bossy6@bellatlantic.net

About 5 years ago I had a blind student in my class. In our school, the district has a full-time person who works with blind students. She attended class with the student, brailled her materials (I had to have them a couple of days in advance), arranged for her books to come from the state library for the blind, and had them ordered in Braille if the state library didn't have them.

The traveling teacher then spent a study hall period with the blind student, checking the student's notes for accuracy and completeness. The student took notes with a brailler in class when it was necessary. She became part of a group of five or six when presentations or group work was done and the other students picked her up at home if there was an arranged after-school practice.

I had very little to do other than be enough ahead of the class that I could give the traveling teacher the necessary materials. (I listed the books that we would be reading at the beginning of the year and then picked out the poetry and short works of prose while those full-length works were being ordered.) This worked very well. I hope you have a supportive district system.

Gayle Carlisle
ovida@montana.com

Last year I was fortunate enough to have a student from the LRE (least restrictive environment) class who sat in on my honors English II class for a half-hour per day without an aide. It was a fantastic, eye-opening experience for all.

I told the class as a whole that he would be joining us and he was from the LRE class. At our school, many students volunteer to be peer tutors in LRE, so most have some knowledge of the LRE class.

As soon as I figure out which class will be most accepting

▶

of him, he will be placed with me again. It has been the best inclusion experience I have ever had, and I have volunteered for many. I can understand your apprehension, but just have high expectations for this student and he will feel right at home!

Sherry Godsey
sgodsey@usit.net

I have taught several students with severe disabilities, ranging from a student who was blind to a student with cerebral palsy to my friend Kevin, whose bones are so brittle that coughing is often disastrous.

Kevin had been wheelchair bound since he was a child, weighed perhaps 80 lbs., and had a full-time aide (Kevin just graduated from college in Colorado!). The other students were very caring and accommodating. They had no problems sharing space with these special students. Indeed, they simply regarded them as being differently-abled.

Contibuted to NCTE-talk

The most important thing I've learned so far is to make sure my relationship is chiefly with the student. Talk to counselors, interpreters, helpers and what not as need be, but keep the focus on your relationship with the student. Sometimes, that can even mean gently reminding the helper to back off. That's the one thing I've really learned, so I thought I'd throw it into the mix.

Kathy Fitch
Kafkaz@kwom.com

I have had two students with aides. One was hearing-impaired and had a signer with him; the other had severe cerebral palsy and was confined to a wheelchair. His aide was along to take notes on a laptop for him as he did not have the control for this. Also, he dictated to her what he wanted to write, and she typed it into the laptop. Both students did fine, both were very bright, and the aides enabled them to be in regular classes where they would be challenged.

Other students were very helpful. Several picked up enough

▶

Tips

Six Features of Effective English Instruction: How do they play out in middle and high school classrooms?

by Elizabeth Close

Reprinted with permission from ENGLISH UPDATE (Spring 2000) published by the National Research Center on English Learning and Achievement (CELA).

CELA Director Judith A. Langer has been studying instruction in the classrooms of 44 teachers in 25 middle and high school English programs in four states: California, Florida, New York, and Texas. Most of the schools in the study serve students who live in inner cities, although the study includes suburban districts as well.

By observing and analyzing classroom instruction as well as student performance, including high-stakes tests, she and her research team have identified six features that characterize the instruction in schools whose students "beat the odds" and outperform their peers in comparable schools.

It is important to note that these features work most effectively when they occur together in a total instructional plan.

The features include the following:

1. Students learn skills and knowledge in multiple lesson types.
2. Teachers integrate test preparations into instruction.
3. Teachers make connections across instruction, curriculum, grades, and life.
4. Students learn strategies for doing the work.
5. Students are expected to be generative thinkers.
6. Classrooms foster cognitive collaboration.

Langer has captured these findings in a report, BEATING THE ODDS: TEACHING MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO READ AND WRITE WELL. We have drawn from this report to create a composite picture to show what these features might look like in action.

Visit the CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS Web page at http://www.ncte.org/notesplus to read the rest of this article.

sign language to communicate with this student (we all learned the alphabet and did a lot of spelling), and they were always very helpful to the student in the wheelchair, holding the door for him and getting out his laptop and plugging it in.

Our physically and mentally challenged students have been mainstreamed for so long that other students don't really seem to treat them any differently than they treat others (except they are often kinder to them than they are to each other).

Patricia Schulze
schulze@byelectric.com

I just wanted to add a note. For several years, my daughters have been in class with a boy with brittle bone disease who uses a wheelchair and has an aide.

It's been wonderful for my kids. He's just another one of the kids in the class and they accept him completely. The aide helps the teacher in the classroom when she doesn't have to directly help the student. She is a friend to all the kids in the class. The boy is very independent, and everyone in the class expects and encourages this. There are just certain things he needs help with and that is handled matter of factly as well. I am very grateful as a parent that my kids have had the pleasure of knowing him.

Mary Tigner-Rasanen
rasanen@worldnet.att.net

I used to teach a high school computer literacy class which included many students with special needs. The class once included a boy who was legally blind, and the only way he could see the screen was to place his eyes directly on it.

I also taught a girl with Down's Syndrome who often urinated in class when she got excited. I had no aide. I was uncomfortable at first, but when I saw how accepting my students were of these kids and how helpful, I relaxed and simply got to know them. You'll be surprised how the "differences" wash away after the initial discomfort eases.

Adrienne Rose
arose@sonic.net

I used to be an aide for a boy with disabilities. I can understand why you would be apprehensive, but you shouldn't be. The aide will take care of all the little things. Just teach the class as you normally would. Maybe before school starts or the first day you can talk to the aide about any special needs he may have such as sitting in the first seat, first row (and a place for his aide), extra time for tests, and laptop computer hook-up.

Contributed to NCTE-talk

Over the last 20 years I have had several students with severe disabilities in my room. I try to meet them ahead of time (sometimes it's the weekend before school begins), and talk with them and their parents about what I can do to make their time with me successful.

I've asked the industrial technology students to make special desks for me, used carbon paper to allow other students to take notes for them, used tape recorders for their writing assignments or tests, etc. I have all this ready the first day the students enter my room so that it isn't a big deal. Your student's family will probably have a wealth of ideas for you.

Linda Schafer
Lschafer@Centralia.K12.MO.US

Three years ago I had a student with limited sight in my classroom. I too felt very apprehensive. It ended up being a very positive experience. The main suggestion I'd tell you is to get in contact with the student's case carrier at your school before school begins. Find out what you need to supply this child (extra space, for example, or providing class material earlier). These are some of the things I had to do.

You should also ask about any emergency procedures you might have to follow for the student's health care. Lastly, I'd inquire about what the aide's role is for the student and in the classroom. Is there any extra help that you will need to provide?

It also might make you feel a bit at ease to call the parents before school and introduce yourself.

Connie Howell
MsHSTeach@aol.com

WebQuests

For WebQuests on works of literature from ON THE PULSE OF MORNING TO TWELFTH NIGHT, visit the Florida State English Education Web site at:

http://www.fsu.edu/~CandI/ENGLISH/web.htm

These WebQuests were created by English Education students in a class titled "Using Technology in Teaching Language Arts." WebQuests featured on the site include THE SCARLET LETTER, TAR BABY, THE YELLOW WALLPAPER, THE AWAKENING, TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD, JULIE OF THE WOLVES, SOJOURNER TRUTH, THE OUTSIDERS, THE GIVER, and more.

Their Day to "Howl": Ginsberg Brings Out the Poetic Best in Middle School Students

by Alfree Enciso

"Eighth graders can't write poetry," a teaching colleague asserted to me in our school's cafeteria a few years back because "They don't read enough good poetry." And she was right. Most children, especially my students, couldn't write poetry and avoided reading it like they would avoid kissing their parents in public.

The weakness wasn't only in my students. I had always avoided teaching poetry, only addressing it when it came up in my thematic units under the safe guidelines of acronym poems, cinquain, and diamond fill-in-the-blanks training-wheel exercises that hid my students' lack of exposure to poetry and my fear of having to teach it.

I wanted poetry to be a fresh experience for me and my classes, an escapade that would give them an "Aha," a discovery. After 12 years of avoiding this part of my curriculum, I decided to take this monster head on, but on my own turf, and in my own way. I wouldn't teach poems from books or anthologies that overanalyzed poems with questions and activities for every page or read poems that the class and I had already been exposed to several thousand times.

"Okay, here's the deal," I told myself. "I'm not going to be bored. I'm going to teach poetry that I personally like, had fond memories of discovering, or had been meaning to get around to."

On the first day of my unit, I told my class that they would have to "discover" a new poem and poet, much like a Pearl Jam or Brandy in the pop music world had recently been discovered.

The next day during lunch, Alex, one of my sixth-period students, brought me a book on poetry in which I stumbled on "The Howl," a poem I had always wanted to read. Soon I was deep into the rage of Ginsberg's poem, and I began to get excited imagining my students and their reaction to the impassioned cries of his generation.

Inspired by the piece, I decided to use it on my bright, but rowdy sixth-period class. I introduced the poem by cutting out each stanza and giving one to every student as he or she walked into class. I told them to make sure that they could read each word correctly and to raise their hands if they needed any assistance. My intention was to make them understand the piece more by being a part of the reading than by listening. I thought they would feel the significance and power of Ginsberg's fury if they heard each other speak and share the words themselves.

The lesson failed miserably. Even my brightest kids stumbled over the phrases or read their stanzas like a P.E. teacher taking roll. "Damn!" I thought. "Okay, forget it. I'll just read it to you." I said as I began passing out the three-page poem.

Even after being read in my most passionate voice, Ginsberg's epic failed to elicit any understanding. As I collected the copies of the poem, a few students asked, "Was he mad?", "Is that autobiographical?"—most merely said they were confused. A few asked, "What is he talking about?" while others shook their heads and said, "That guy's weird." No one felt like discussing the poem, and everyone seemed eager to move on. Resigned to failure and left with only five minutes of class, I told the students to take out a sheet of paper and write down the first phrase of the poem, leaving out the last word. Dutifully, each one of them wrote "I saw the best minds of my __________."

I explained to the class that I wanted them to write their '90's version of "The Howl"; and with those brief instructions, the bell rang. "So much for challenging them," I mused and quietly shook my head. I dismissed the experiment, already thinking ahead to Friday and an Ishmael Reed poem I intended to spring on them.

The next day during passing periods, nutrition and lunch, I kept bumping into students from my sixth period. They were animated: "Mr. Enciso, I wrote my poem. You should hear Rai-Nesha's. Mr. Enciso, Sherry's poem is incredible. Are we going to share them?"

What happened? I was sure the lesson had bombed. What was going on? When sixth period came, my normally boisterous class settled down unusually quickly. The room crackled with expectancy. They hid their papers like little kids

▶

NEH's EdSitement Web Site

The EdSitement Web page at http://edsitement.neh.gov is sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and offers links to a rich variety of K–12 sites, plus a teachers' lounge, reference shelf, lesson-plan area, and list of top sites for literature and language arts study.

Among the Web sites listed are Documents of African-American Women, Documents of Civil War Women, the Geoffrey Chaucer Web site, the Nathaniel Hawthorne Web site, Romantic Circles, and the Victorian Web.

Among the lesson plans available are Hawthorne: Author and Narrator; Mark Twain and American Humor; Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Power of Nonviolence, and "You Kiss by the Book": Shakespeare's ROMEO AND JULIET.

preparing for a surprise party instead of a poetry reading.

When I asked the class, "Who did their homework?" several students raised their hands, including some children who rarely participated. "Okay, who would like to share their poem?" I asked. Immediately, everyone pointed to Sherry and implored her to read.

In a searing, yet controlled voice she began.

I saw the best minds of my school ravaged by the biting disease
of racism and mind-burning pressures,
pushing, driving, exploding into crazy
bone-shattering drive-bys
looking here, there, and away
over their shoulders, asking, imploring,
hiding from; wondering,
Can Mr. Toda see me, kissing, smoking loosebooze, fighting,
who jump the fence like escaped criminals of
Alcatraz, LA County,
who, like hunted prey, leap, lie, die, cry, cheating,
all up over the $200 shoes,
who speak with their fists, a whole bloodied,
complex, bizarre foreign language
like the speeding superhighway #187 of rap,
pulsating, writhing, echoing
who idolize Snoop Dog as a hero glorifying ghetto
practicing whispering the evil religion of gats,
'hoods, niggaz, tricks trick-o-treat society preaching,
mind-washing immature zones of thought,
who wrestle, struggle, climbing,
falling off a high, getting down,
Ed Debevics wasting, blowing Galleria-blinded,
who suck money, shoplift 7 Eleven n' Thrifty's,
joining, becoming, blending,
among bloody gangs 18th and 24th,
who ride down Slauson, Crenshaw, Fairfax,
underestimating, lower, lower
exploding into the walls of sex, Dope, Coke, inhale, exhale,
Baldwin Hills, Hollywood, Venice, smothered crawling,
slow mo blasting of LSD of rap through wasted veins,
who worship women, destroy women,
bitches to them not, never—forever mothers, wives, sistas,
who listen to "All a nigga needs is his bitch and his gat" kingz,
who believe, pimp Big Poppa, life rising with the sun,
who raise up, fly over Compton,
trying, crushing Alpha Omega,
LIFE society, why, Why, Stop the cries . . . WE WILL SURVIVE!

When she finished, there was a slight pause, an awed silence, and then everyone was on their feet, giving their "props" to Sherry and the incredible poem she read. But the class wasn't through.

Looking for Ideas for Teaching Poetry?

Visit the CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS Web page at www.ncte.org/notesplus to read three lively articles from CALIFORNIA ENGLISH, the journal of the California Association of Teachers of English:

" 'PTV': THE POETRY VIDEO PROJECT" by A. Waller Hastings

"RECLAIMING THE BODY: TEACHING MODERN POETRY" by Tom Hansen

"WHY I DO POETRY: A CASE STUDY OF THE EFFECT OF POETRY ON A BASIC WRITER" by Jim Cody

Others wanted to read. Rai-Nesha read her poem "Society's Web" about people "satisfied with murder, the painful screams of a girl stripped of her virginity . . . and baffled, bewildered parents who didn't know the location of their child until a 'ring' at the door."

Then Julia vented her frustrations in "Generation" an impassioned dirge about kids who "hallucinate beautiful models, jacking off in bed, Never learn . . . Never learn . . . melting in a cauldron of despair . . ."

Where did all this eloquent expression come from? What had my "failed" lesson unleashed? Talk about surprises and shattered expectations. When our vice principal walked into my class and Sherry read her poem for the second time, I reached for some Kleenex to wipe the tears from my eyes; partly from sadness about what I had learned of these kids' lives, and partly from the pride in my students for what they had taught me and themselves about this world we live in. When I asked for the poems to be turned in, only a few complied. The rest wanted to work harder on theirs and capture some of the "vapors" Sherry had released.

For me, I wondered what it was that I had unchained that proved so successful. Was it approaching poetry on my own terms that elicited such a strong response, or the fact that I gave the students a form or style to imitate?

Perhaps a little of both. Or maybe the real lesson came in my change of attitude and approach. After all, I took chances, tried something difficult, and strayed from the safety of my file cabinet of lesson plans and handouts. By doing this I discovered a very simple truth, that my students, the ones caught in that tender age of middleness, were capable of doing anything, including writing great poetry.

REPRINTED FROM CALIFORNIA ENGLISH *(Summer, 1997).*

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE
STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION
(Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)

1. Publication Title:CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS
2. Publication No.: 729-310
3. Filing Date: August 17, 2000
4. Issue Frequency: Quarterly
5. No. Of Issues Published Annually: 4
6. Annual Subscription Price: $15.00
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication: NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801-1096
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher: NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801-1096
9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor: NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Rd., Urbana, Il 61801-1096; Felice Kaufmann, NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801-1096; Felice Kaufmann, NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801-1096
10. Owner: NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801-1096
11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities: NONE
12.Tax Status Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months
13. Publication Name: CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS
14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: April 2000

15. Extent and Nature of Circulation		Ave.No.Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	Actual No.Copies Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total No. Copies *(Net Press Run)*		25,493	26,730
b. Paid and/or Requested Circulation	(1) Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541. *(Include advertiser's proof and exchange copies)*		
	(2) Paid In-County Subscriptions *(Include advertiser's proof and exchange copies)*	20,877	21,101
	(3) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution		
	(4) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS		
c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation *(Sum of 15b(1), 15b(2), 15b(3) and 15b(4)*		20,877	21,101
d. Free distribution by Mail *(Samples, complimentary and other free)*	(1) Outside-County as Stated on Form 3541	4	4
	(2) In-County as Stated on Form 3541		
	(3) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS		
e. Free Distribution Outside the Mail *(Carriers or other means)*			
f. Total Free Distribution *(Sum of 15d & 15e)*		4	4
g. Total Distribution *(Sum of 15c & 15f)*		20,881	21,105
h. Copies not Distributed		4,612	5,625
i. Total *(Sum of 15g, 15h(1) and 15h(2))*		25,493	26,730
j. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation *(15c divided by 15g x 100)*		100%	100%

16. This Statement of Ownership will be printed in the October 2000 issue of this publication.
17. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner: Margaret Chambers, Managing Editor for Journals; Date: August 17, 2000

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including multiple damages and civil penalties).

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

NOTES

Teen Read Week

The Young Adult Library Services Association, a division of the American Library Association, has designated October 15–21, 2000, as its annual Teen Read Week. The week focuses on helping teens read for enjoyment and motivating them to read more often just for fun. This year's theme is "Take Time to Read." Visit the Teen Read Week Web site at http://www.ala.org/teenread/ for tips and ideas, sample publicity materials, and resources to get the word out.

Youth Hall of Fame

The Youth Hall of Fame Web site provides examples of people who accomplished a lot at a young age. Categories of the achievements include Home, Business, Music, Movies/T.V., Bravery, and Sports. Visit http://www.skyboom.com/youthhalloffame.

Peace City

Looking for a positive and safe family Web site? Peace City, at http://www.peacecity1.com, gives teens examples of positive role models and promotes creativity as an alternative to drugs and violence. It is divided into three areas: Teen Town, Family Town, and Peace City International.

Sixty-Minute Shakespeare

The Sixty-Minute Shakespeare series is an alternative for teachers with limited time who still want to expose their students to the riches of Shakespeare. Author Cass Foster condensed the language in select Shakespeare plays without modernizing them. He also provided footnotes to help readers understand the more arcane words and phrases. Foster is quick to point out that the series is intended as a stepping stone in the study of Shakespeare—not a substitute for the original works. For more information, call 480-940-8182 or visit http://www.fivestarsupport.com/thebard.

IDEAS PLUS BOOK EIGHTEEN—Correction

Our sincere apologies go out to Dodie Zolman of Grandville High School in Grandville, Michigan—We omitted two lines of type from her teaching idea, "Post-Reading Response Activities," which appears on page 35 of *IDEAS PLUS BOOK EIGHTEEN*.

Activity 2 ends with option h ("I began to think . . ."), and Activity 3 should begin at that point as follows:

3. Complete the following in two or three paragraphs.
   a. This story is mostly about ________

INVIGORATE YOUR TEACHING

Use an NCTE Plus Membership to put a fresh spark into your teaching. Every Plus Membership includes:

- Voting membership in the NCTE Secondary Section.
- A subscription to the NCTE newspaper, *THE COUNCIL CHRONICLE*.
- A subscription to *CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS*, a quarterly publication of practical teaching ideas contributed by teachers across the country. Each issue is packed with dozens of immediately usable ideas (published January, April, August, and October).
- *IDEAS PLUS*, an annual book of classroom ideas and exercises covering the teaching of composition, literature, and language. *IDEAS PLUS* provides a ready reserve of teaching ideas—ones you can use with existing lessons. In addition, it will help in creating new units and reviving old ones.

Become an NCTE Plus member for only $45 per year. Or, if you are already an NCTE member, add Plus to your membership for only $15 per year. (NCTE Plus will run concurrently with your existing membership.)

☐ **YES**, I'd like to join NCTE and become an NCTE Plus member today. $45.00

☐ **YES**, I am already an NCTE member, and I would like to add NCTE Plus to my existing membership. $15.00

Your current membership number: ________

Name ________

Address ________

City ________ State ______ Zip ________

Phone: Home ________ Office ________

☐ Remittance enclosed.
(Make your check payable to NCTE.)

☐ Charge my VISA or MasterCard.
Account Number ____/____/____/____
Exp. Date ____/____

☐ Bill me. ________
(Your signature) P-3125

YOU MAY ALSO CALL 1-877-369-6283
OR GO ONLINE AT
WWW.NCTE.ORG/MEM/ENROLL.FORM.HTML

Now Available *from* NCTE!

Roots and Branches
A Resource of Native American Literature
Themes, Lessons, and Bibliographies
Dorothea M. Susag
Foreword by Joseph Bruchac

Award Winner!

Roots and Branches
A Resource of Native American Literature
Dorothea M. Susag
With a foreword by Joseph Bruchac

This valuable resource book offers teachers an opportunity to learn and to teach about Native American literatures in context. Susag examines the historical and literary contexts that frame the literary work of Native peoples. Lessons, units, and activities keyed to grade level offer practical support. Detailed annotated bibliographies direct the teacher to a wealth of possibilities and to other resources historical, cultural, and educational. *Winner of the Award of Excellence for American Indian Education. 310 pp. 1998. Grades 7—12. ISBN 0-8141-4195-1.*

No. 41951-3125 $31.95 ($22.95)

To order, call NCTE
toll-free at **1-877-369-6283**
or fax **217-328-9645**.

NCTE
www.ncte.org

NCTE

Shaping the Future Every Day!

2000–2001 Meetings Calendar

National Council of Teachers of English

NCTE

NCTE Annual Convention
"Teaching Matters"
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
November 16–21, 2000

CCCC Annual Convention
"Composing Community"
Denver, Colorado
March 14–17, 2001

NCTE Spring Conference
"Create the Magic"
Birmingham, Alabama
March 28–31, 2001

Whole Language Umbrella Annual Conference
"Freedom to Teach, Freedom to Learn: Critical Literacy for Caring, Democratic Classrooms"
Chicago, Illinois
July 25–29, 2001

For more information, contact NCTE at 800-369-6283, ext. 3642 or check the NCTE Web site at www.ncte.org.

NCTE Executive Director

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) seeks applications for the position of Executive Director.

Responsibilities include:
Enacting policies of a 17-member Executive Committee; general administration and operational management of the 100-member headquarters staff in Urbana, Illinois; internal liaisons with volunteer officers, editors, governing bodies, and 80,000 members and subscribers; sponsorship of 120 regional, state, provincial, local and student affiliates; and external liaisons with related organizations, governmental units, funding agencies, and the media that require some periods of travel.

Applicants must have the following:
Graduate degree(s) in an appropriate area; demonstrated competence in administration and budget management skills; commitment to the work of professional organizations to strengthen teaching, learning, and research; commitment to cultural diversity; some familiarity with information technology; and superior skills in speaking, writing, and listening.

Additional preferred qualifications include the following:
Knowledge of NCTE's history and mission; exceptional interpersonal and problem-solving skills; experience running a volunteer-led professional organization, experience exercising management skills in an organization of 20 or more; strong leadership skills built on collaboration, the delegation of responsibility, and shared governance practices; the vision and practical wisdom necessary to develop strategies to advance the mission of the Council and position the Council to influence governmental policy and public opinion on relevant educational issues; skill in developing public relations campaigns and mounting lobbying efforts to influence policy and legislation; familiarity with the field of publishing; a record of scholarship, publication, or education experience that commands the respect of teachers at all levels of education.

A three-year renewable contract is offered. Salary is negotiable, fully competitive including a benefits program.

Qualified individuals should submit a letter of application expressing interest and qualifications; a list of five references, preferably including those from voluntary leadership; a resume; and a one-page statement of the applicant's vision for NCTE to the following:

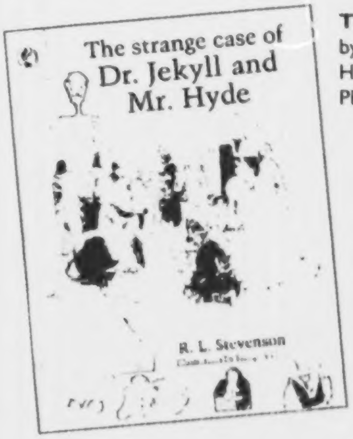
Leila Christenbury, Chair
NCTE Search Committee
214 Old Orchard Lane
Richmond, VA 23226

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. The National Council of Teachers of English is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer by choice.

The **Whole Story** Series

A CD-ROM between covers

The Whole Story is a unique series that adds striking illustrations and extended captions to classic tales, and provides readers with background information that could only otherwise be found through a broad range of supplemental research. Each complete classic story is placed within the context of the era in which it was written, and is brought vividly to life. For Grades 5 and up; full-color illustrations.


The strange case of
Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde
R. L. Stevenson

THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE
by Robert Louis Stevenson

HC: 0-670-88865-6	$25.99
PB: 0-670-88871-0	$17.99

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer
Around the World in Eighty Days
The Call of the Wild
A Christmas Carol
Frankenstein
Heidi
The Jungle Book
Little Women
The Pit and the Pendulum
Treasure Island
White Fang
Jack London

Other WHOLE STORY Titles:

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer
by Mark Twain
PB: 0-670-86985-6 $17.99

Around the World in Eighty Days
by Jules Verne
HC: 0-670-86917-1 $24.99
PB: 0-670-86793-4 $18.99

The Call of the Wild
by Jack London
PB: 0-670-86796-9 $17.99

A Christmas Carol
by Charles Dickens
HC: 0-670-88878-8 $25.99
PB: 0-670-88879-6 $17.99

Frankenstein
by Mary Shelley
PB: 0-670-87801-4 $17.99

Heidi
by Johanna Spyri
PB: 0-670-86987-2 $17.99

The Jungle Book
by Rudyard Kipling
HC: 0-670-86919-8 $22.99
PB: 0-670-86797-7 $17.99

Little Women
by Louisa May Alcott
PB: 0-670-87706-9 $16.99

The Pit and the Pendulum
And Other Stories
by Edgar Allan Poe
HC: 0-670-88706-4 $25.99
PB: 0-670-88725-0 $17.99

Treasure Island
by Robert Louis Stevenson
PB: 0-670-86795-0 $18.99

White Fang
by Jack London
HC: 0-670-88479-0 $25.99
PB: 0-670-88480-4 $17.99

COMING IN SPRING 2001
The Picture of Dorian Gray

VIKING CHILDREN'S BOOKS
A division of Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers
345 Hudson Street• New York, NY 10014
www.penguinputnam.com

New from NCTE!

Reading Stories

Activities and Texts for Critical Readings

Bronwyn Mellor, Marnie O'Neill, and Annette Patterson

The five chapters in *Reading Stories* begin with what students know about stories and then move through crucial topics such as readers' expectations; authors' intentions; how and why readings change; reading in terms of gender, race, and class; and what is at stake in disagreements about readings. These and other issues are brought into sharp relief by consideration of 11 short stories—included in the book and selected for their appeal to students—by a range of authors. These stories form the basis of concrete activities for talk and writing in which students work to think critically about the content and implications of what they read—and to consider issues that, until now, they may have taken for granted. *The NCTE Chalkface Series. 136 pp. 2000. Grades 9–12. ISBN 0-8141-3911-6.*

No. 39116-3125 $16.95 ($12.95)

Studying Literature

New Approaches to Poetry and Fiction

Brian Moon

Studying Literature provides a powerful way for high school teachers and students to explore the question of what makes a piece of writing "literature." The book includes a variety of literary texts, along with accessible discussions and stimulating exercises to help students investigate the values, assumptions, and practices that underlie literary activity. Individual and group activities are based on poems, short stories, and prose extracts—all included in the book. *The NCTE Chalkface Series. 94 pp. 2000. Grades 9–12. ISBN 0-8141-4871-9.*

No. 48719-3125 $16.95 ($12.95)

Reading Fictions

Applying Literary Theory to Short Stories

Bronwyn Mellor, Annette Patterson, and Marnie O'Neill

Reading Fictions uses text-based discussion and activities to help students explore the notion that a text does not simply "have" a definitive meaning but invites readers to construct meanings from a range of possibilities. Each chapter begins with an overview of key concepts and moves on to stories—reprinted in the book—by authors including Joyce Carol Oates, Richard Brautigan, and Bessie Head. *Approx. 100 pp. 2000. Grades 9–12. ISBN 0-8141-3869-1.*

No. 38691-3125 $16.95 ($12.95)

Coming this fall!

Gendered Fictions

Wayne Martino with Bronwyn Mellor

Gendered Fictions helps students explore how fiction and nonfiction texts construct gender by encouraging readers to take up "gendered" reading positions that support or challenge particular versions of masculinity and femininity. Thirteen texts for analysis—from authors including Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Toni Cade Bambara—are reprinted in the book. *Approx. 100 pp. 2000. Grades 9–12. ISBN 0-8141-1825-9.*

No. 18259-3125 $16.95 ($12.95)

Coming this fall!

NCTE

To order, call NCTE toll-free at 1-877-369-6283 or fax 217-328-9645.

CLASSROOM NOTES Plus

A QUARTERLY OF TEACHING IDEAS JANUARY 2001

In This Issue

Teaching about the Holocaust

The Literacy Club

Confronting Prejudice and Genocide

Family Stories

From the National Council of Teachers of English

CLASSROOM NOTES Plus

Project Coordinator
Felice A. Kaufmann

Editorial Assistant
Emily Nafziger

Design
Joellen Bryant

Consultant
NCTE Associate Executive Director
Dale Allender

Copyright © 2001 by the National Council of Teachers of English. Volume 18, Number 3 (January 2001)

It is the policy of NCTE in its journals and other publications to provide a forum for the open discussion of ideas concerning the content and the teaching of English and the language arts. Publicity accorded to any particular point of view does not imply endorsement by the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, or the membership at large, except in announcements of policy, where such endorsement is clearly specified.

CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS (ISSN 1526-5641) is published four times a year, in January, April, August, and October, by the National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096, as an exclusive benefit of CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS membership. Annual membership dues are $45.00; $15.00 of this amount is for CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS. Inquiries about NCTE Plus membership or communications regarding change of address and permission to reprint should be addressed to CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096. Periodical postage paid at Urbana, Illinois, and at additional mailing offices.

Cover photo: ©1994 Dwight R. Cendrowski/Mira.

Photo: Elizabeth Crews

Call for Submissions

CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS invites your descriptions of original, unpublished teaching practices for consideration. In the case of an adapted idea, we ask that you clearly identify any sources that deserve mention.

To make your description as useful as possible to CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS readers, we suggest that you consider questions like these as you prepare your submission: What are the goals of the activity or classroom practice? What makes it especially meaningful for you and your students? How do you introduce this idea to students? In what ways do their interests and ideas help direct the course of this activity? What natural progression does this activity usually follow? How are students encouraged to reflect on their learning? How do you judge this practice to be effective? How would you change your implementation of it in the future?

Please submit double-spaced, typed copy. Receipt of your submission will be acknowledged by postcard, but acknowledgment does not guarantee publication. We are unable to return manuscripts, so please keep a copy. We reserve the right to edit submissions for clarity and length.

All CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS submissions will be considered for the print version of CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS, for inclusion on the CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS Web page (www.ncte.org/notesplus), or for use in the annual edition of IDEAS PLUS.

Send submissions to CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096 or send e-mail to notesplus@ncte.org. For more information, call or e-mail Felice Kaufmann at NCTE Headquarters: 1-800-369-6283, ext. 3648; fkaufmann@ncte.org.

Many of the e-mail contributions in this issue are reprinted from NCTE-talk, an electronic discussion group sponsored by NCTE. To read interesting discussions on a variety of topics related to secondary teaching, visit the NCTE-talk archives at http://www.ncte.org/lists/ncte-talk/archives.html or click on Site Map from the NCTE home page (www.ncte.org) and choose NCTE-talk Archives.

A school
is a room
with four walls
and tomorrow
inside.

—Anonymous

Watch
for additional Tips
throughout this issue!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Ideas from the Classroom

Blithering Titles—Sue Torsberg 2
Combating Stage Fright—Linda S. Beath 2
The Literacy Club—Tory Babcock 3
Practicing Practical Reading —Frances B. Carter 5
Family Stories —Rose Reissman 6
Not Just for Elementary Students —Tracy Felan 7
A Teacher Shares the Meaning of Martin Luther King Jr. Day with Her Students—Jessyca Pearson Yucas 8

Focus on Multicultural Education

How We Are White—Gary Howard 8

Focus on Teaching about the Holocaust

*(*This mini-theme continues through page 29.)*

Always Remember, Never Forget 10
A Silent Warm-Up —Robin Wolcott 15
Correspondence in a Concentration Camp—Don Leibold 16
A Hiding Place —Victoria Lewis 20
Confronting Prejudice and Genocide: Using Symbols and Stories in Holocaust Education—Nancy D. Kersell 22

Teacher Talk

Clarifying Goals for Teaching the Holocaust 12
Suggestions for Nonfiction Related to the Holocaust 17
Alternatives for Students Who Are Not Allowed to Watch SCHINDLER'S LIST 20
Staying Refreshed 23

Classroom Solutions

Showing Who We Are through a Class Quilt 6

Web Resources

Help for New Teachers 5
Teachers' Web Sites 7
Web Sites Related to the Life and Work of Martin Luther King Jr. 9
Facing History and Ourselves 11
Web Links Related to the Holocaust 19
Online Resources from *English Journal* 21

Notes 30

IDEAS FROM THE CLASSROOM

The teaching ideas in this issue cover a lot of ground, from helping students write titles, read for information, overcome stage fright, and broaden their reading habits to making connections between home and school with family storytelling. We also include one teacher's personal account of how she shares the meaning of Martin Luther King Day with her students, as well as an article by Howard White, the author of We Can't Teach What We Don't Know: White Teachers, Multiracial Schools.

In addition, a special themed section in this issue focuses on "Teaching about the Holocaust." We hope this collection of strategies and resources will prove useful for new and experienced teachers alike.

Blithering Titles

I've always found writing a good title difficult, and teaching how to write one impossible.

Here's a lesson on creating titles that's worked for me. In my writing class, I use "What Is Good Writing," chapter three from Ken Macrorie's Telling Writing (Boynton Cook, 1985), and "Write First," chapter one from Donald Murray's Write to Learn (fifth edition, Harcourt Brace, 1984), as reading materials over several days to establish a writing criteria.

After discussing these chapters, I ask students to think about a piece of their own writing that they consider good for whatever reason. They jot down what made that piece of writing work so well. Invariably they mention "showing details," "metaphors," "strong verbs," "surprises," "some kind of discovery," "dialogue," or "a problem." Of course, we have just covered some of these very elements in our class discussion, and there are always students who make the connection.

Later, as we talk about Murray's strategy for collecting, I give an overnight assignment: "Write down twenty published titles you think are clever for whatever reason. You can include books, movies, songs, television programs, poems, or newspaper articles."

As students do the following activity in class the next day, I walk around the room giving credit for homework. My main objective is to make the connection that the qualities of good writing are the same for titles.

Class Activity

1. In a group of three or four, each student reads aloud his or her list.
2. Each student decides the best five titles on his or her list and circles those. Group members may help each other.
3. The group considers the best five titles from everyone. This time, the group decides what traits these good titles share.
4. One person from each group writes those common traits on the board for all to read. I note, "Traits such as interesting" or "funny" don't specify any details. For example, a student might say, "The Chocolate War is funny." "Why?" I'd ask. The student may respond, "Wars can't be chocolate." We'd then look at our preestablished list and find the criteria of "surprise" or "metaphor."
5. The student who wrote the traits on the board explains the group's characteristics of an effective title and orally relates examples from the group's discussion.
6. All students copy from the board the characteristics of good titles.
7. After all students have explained their group's thinking, I pose questions like these: "What do these traits remind you of?" or "Where have we seen these before?" These characteristics on the board really reflect the same qualities we established with prior discussions.
8. Students may also see onamatoepia, puns, assonance, etc. Then I ask, "Can essays/prose writing use poetic aspects?" If students don't see this possibility, I drop hints. For example, I might say, "What's the poetic term that means the 'repetition of consonant sounds?'" Once we clarify the definition, I direct students to see if any examples of alliteration exist in their titles.

Reminding the class that Murray talks about brainstorming 100 titles for one draft [much groaning usually ensues], I challenge students to think about our discussion of titles the next time they are in the beginning stages of drafting a piece of writing. I ask, "Why would finding a title help in the beginning stages of writing?" and "What purpose does a title serve?" Students offer ideas, and I add, if no one else does, that a title can suggest the focus of a piece of writing, get the reader's attention, or begin to build suspense. Finally, I close with, "Take these models of good titles and your notes from today and refer to them the next time you need to create a clever title for a piece of writing."

Sue Torsberg, Naperville Central High School, Naperville, Illinois

Combating Stage Fright

The article about stage fright in the August 2000 Classroom Notes Plus reminded me of the strategies I developed during my twelve years as a high school speech and English teacher.

▶

Two practices were helpful. First, I arranged for students to begin by giving short speeches to small groups of students and then move to giving more complex speeches to the entire class.

These first short speeches were given in the school cafeteria in groups of four or five students. Using small groups allowed every student to give a speech during the same class period, thereby increasing students' opportunities to speak before an audience.

Each student was asked to fill out a simple feedback form, in order to help them learn how to analyze effective speaking skills. Speakers also filled out a short, simple form about how they felt about their speech.

The second strategy was borrowed from my English classes, in which I used writing as a process methodology. I asked myself this question, "Why do I give my writing students an opportunity to plan, write, revise, and edit prior to publication, when I expect my speech students to give a polished, final speech without help in processing their ideas and delivery skills?"

Therefore, the small groups that were initially used for the short speeches became the preliminary audience for students' early efforts in composing and delivering their longer speeches. Again, simple feedback forms that reflected the criteria for the final evaluation helped the students to give useful feedback to one another.

Once successful in a small group, it is easier to transfer that success to larger groups. Thanks to these practices, stage fright became almost nonexistent among my students.

Linda S. Beath, Central Washington University, Ellensburg, Washington

The Literacy Club: A "Free Reading" Project

In an attempt to broaden my high school students' awareness of culturally diverse literature and to encourage them to become avid readers, reading from a broad canon, I have devised the Literacy Club "Free Reading" Project.

Assigned twice a year during the weeks when we read a play or study poetry in class (in essence, when they have no heavy out-of-class reading assignments), the students choose any number of books they wish to read from the extensive (but by no means exhaustive) list I have compiled. (See student handout on page 4.)

Although I compiled this list based on my own reading, our California state framework and what is currently being read in colleges and universities across the country (my former students e-mail me from their respective colleges to keep me updated), over the years my students and I have modified the list based on their feedback. I have also found that their enthusiasm sells the books much more quickly than I can (for example, a few kids started reading Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha* and as word spread, more and more students added it to their list).

Some of the subject matter addresses adult issues, but as my students are all seniors and will be reading such works next year anyway, I have a bit of latitude here. Plus, as the choice is theirs, they can select books they feel comfortable with; I indicate when I present the books which texts have

▶

Visit the *Classroom Notes Plus* Web Site at http://www.ncte.org/notesplus for These New Resources!

- New Postings to the *Classroom Ideas* page:
  "A Metaphorical Introduction to the Writing Process"
  "The Do's and Dont's of Study Skills"
  "Putting It in a Note to the Teacher"
  "Letters to Anne Frank"
- "Literature and Lessons of the Holocaust: Theory and Practice" (See page 18 for an excerpt from this article, which appears in *A Middle Mosaic* [NCTE, 2000])
- "Holocaust Survivor Gerda Weissman Klein Addresses Teachers" (See page 25 for an excerpt from this talk, which Klein presented at the 1996 NCTE Annual Convention)
- Web Links Related to the Holocaust (See page 19 for a condensed version of this list)
- Online resources from *English Journal* on teaching the Holocaust:
  "Teaching the Holocaust: Light from the Yellow Star Leads the Way" by Nancy Gorrell
  "Teaching Empathy through Ecphrastic Poetry: Entering a Curriculum of Peace" by Nancy Gorrell
  "Peace by Piece: the Freeing Power of Language and Literacy through the Arts" by Mary F. Wright and Sandra Kowalezyk
  "Embracing *All But My Life* by Gerda Weissmann Klein" by Harold M. Foster

more intense scenes, themes, and so on. However, were I to give this assignment to younger students, I would craft my selections according to their grade level.

When I present the assignment, I give the students a brief oral synopsis of each book and often will make personalized recommendations based on each student's interests. After they have had a few days to check out the books in our school library (we have multiple copies on hand due to a visit I paid to a local used bookstore), they then fill out a 3" x 5" card detailing the books they will read, including page numbers.

This provides a handy reference pack for me when they come in to be "checked out" on the book(s).

Checking out consists of having a short conversation with me (usually around five minutes) about their book. I try to keep our conversations on the books very nonthreatening and more like a casual conversation between friends about a book that they have just read. I ask questions to ascertain if the students have indeed read the books and if they have thought about them. My questions range from knowledge-

▶

Student Handout for Literacy Club "Free Reading" Project

For the next 6 weeks, you will take part in the Free Reading Project. You may read any fiction books you wish from the following list:

Achebe, Chinua—*No Longer at Ease*
Allende, Isabel—*The House of the Spirits, Paula, Daughter of Fortune*
Alvarez, Julia—*How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accent*
Angelou, Maya—*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, The Heart of a Woman*
Baldwin, James A.—*Go Tell it on the Mountain*
Boyle, T. Coraghessan—*The Tortilla Curtain*
Cisneros, Sandra—*House on Mango Street*
Courtenay, Bryce—*The Power of One*
Ellison, Ralph—*The Invisible Man*
Esquivel, Laura—*Like Water for Chocolate*
Fontes, Montserrat—*Dreams of the Centaur*
Golden, Arthur S.—*Memoirs of a Geisha*
Guterson, David—*Snow Falling on Cedars*
Houston, Jeanne—*Farewell to Manzanar*
Hurston, Zora Neale—*Their Eyes Were Watching God*
Kingsolver, Barbara—*The Bean Trees, Pigs in Heaven, Animal Dreams, The Poisonwood Bible*
Marquez, Gabriel Garcia—*One Hundred Years of Solitude*
Martinez, Victor—*Parrot in the Oven*
McCourt, Frank—*Angela's Ashes*
Momaday, N. Scott—*The Way to Rainy Mountain, House Made of Dawn*
Morrison, Toni—*The Bluest Eye, Song of Solomon, Tar Baby, Sula, Beloved, Paradise*
Potok, Chaim—*The Chosen*
Silko, Leslie Marmon—*Ceremony*
Spiegelman, Art—*Maus* (comic book)
Tan, Amy—*The Joy Luck Club, The Kitchen God's Wife, The Hundred Secret Senses*
Toomer, Jean—*Cane*
Tsukiyama, Gail—*Women of the Sink, The Samurai's Garden, Night of Many Dreams*
Villasenor, Victor E.—*Rain of Gold, Macho!*
Walker, Alice—*The Color Purple*
Welch, James—*Winter in the Blood, Fools Crow*
Wiesel, Elie—*Night*
Wright, Richard—*Native Son*

Checking out will occur on __________ (date).

Criteria for grading is as follows:

If you read	*you will receive this grade*
800 pages	A+
650 pages	A
600 pages	A-
550 pages	B+
500 pages	B
450 pages	B-
400 pages	C+
350 pages	C
300 pages	C-
(and so on)	

based queries to more critical thinking types of questions, such as what they have learned about other cultures from their books and how they have helped to explode any racial stereotypes or preconceptions they may have had. Students "check out" once they show that they have read and thought about their book. Grades are predicated on the number of pages they have read—crude, but effective.

Regarding grading, I try to make a few allowances regarding numbers of pages read (such as only giving half credit for Spiegelmann's *Maus*, which is a comic book) but I've really had no problems regarding equity over the four years I've been using this project. The students select books that they are comfortable with and I encourage them to read a mix of books (it is rare that a student doesn't go for the full credit A).

For classes where it seems appropriate, I increase the number of pages required for an A, a B, etc. Additionally, advanced students are encouraged to read the books that have been on the AP exam the last few years, which includes Ellison's *Invisible Man*, Walker's *The Color Purple*, and Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

While this project is in progress, I have office hours every day after school and I encourage the students to drop in and chat about their books.

Additionally, I will on occasion give them some time in class to freeread, and conversations invaribly arise about what they are reading. This leads to dialogue among the students, which makes them feel part of a community of readers—one of my goals. We also have "Book Chats" in class where students get a chance to present the book they are reading informally to the larger group, say if it is a good read or not, why they like or dislike it, what is problematic about it, and so on. Students could also be grouped according to what they are reading for more in-depth discussion.

This assignment is perhaps one of my most successful and popular assignments for a number of reasons. First of all, the students like having some freedom to choose the books in which they are most interested, books which are often still on the bestseller lists and which can be found in the new fiction section of many bookstores. Second, the books chosen for the list cover a variety of compelling topics, which keeps the students excited and involved in their reading. Third, I find that with this assignment students feel empowered to be part of an adult community that reads. Fourth, and probably one of the main reasons why this is such a popular assignment, is that there are no quizzes, papers, in-class exams or journals on these books, thus students are free to read for sheer enjoyment.

In the future, I will continue to add books to the selection list. Using this assignment gives me a great excuse to read extensively myself— after all, I'm doing it for my students.

This assignment is a deliberate move away from a more structured method requiring journals, written responses, and so on. We do so much of that in all our other assignments in my class that I wanted to give them a chance to read simply for their own enjoyment. And although students could probably explore these books more deeply through guided instruction, I also want them to learn to read a lot on their own. From what students (and their parents) tell me, this assignment is quite successful in hooking them on reading quality literature for fun.

Tory Babcock, Santa Ynez Valley Union High School, Santa Ynez, California

Help for New Teachers

On this site, veteran teachers give comprehensive advice on topics such as "How To Survive Open House," "How To Inform and Involve Parents," and "How To Get the Most Out of Staff Development."

http://www.inspiringteachers.com/tips/index/index.html

Ted Nellen
tnellen@tnellen.com

Practicing Practical Reading

I use the following activity in an effort to strengthen my middle school students' reading abilities and give them experience in "survival reading," or reading for information.

I ask students to look at home for clean, empty containers and packages for food products, candy, beverages, cleaning agents, and toiletries that have informative labels. I do the same, and we bring these to class on a set day.

After I make sure that each student has two or three items to examine, I ask students to look at their items and note the types of information given and how the information is presented. I also ask them to think about what categories of information are provided, such as ingredients, daily values, and so on.

After five minutes or so, we take turns making observations and reading aloud from our labels. I sometimes quiz students on their ability to decipher the tables included on food labels by asking everyone with a food label to read aloud the percentage of sodium in one serving of their food, or to tell me how many grams of protein are listed for their food item. Students can also be allowed to volunteer to lead a few rounds of questions like these.

I also like to ask students what generalizations they can make about the information provided—for instance, do all

▶

food items contain certain types of details? Do all cleaning agents include warnings on their labels? Do they find any common ingredients in many cleaning agents?

This exercise need not take more than one class period, but students enjoy it and the reading practice it provides will be universally useful.

Frances B. Carter, Linkhorne Middle School, Lynchburg, Virginia

Family Stories: The "Telling" Connection between School and Home

Throughout each school year, much is said about the need for teachers and schools to meaningfully connect with families and caregivers. One means of doing this can take place through the telling of family stories in the classroom.

I tell my middle school students that we are going to conduct a storytelling project, and together we craft a letter inviting their families to send in pictures, souvenirs, and memorabilia which relate to a special moment, event, or person in family life. Families may also contribute drawings or photos of items if they would rather an item not be brought to class.

I suggest that family members may wish to consider the following as possibilities: a keepsake (ring, quilt, bedspread, accessory, dress, hat, shawl, piece of jewelry, candlesticks, tablecloth), a photo, a book, a family affair menu, christening notice, postcard, stamps, souvenir from an outing, trophy, prize, graduation certificate, curio item, baseball cap, old tee shirt, tennis racquet, immigration card, train ticket, etc.

I encourage family members to actually come in and share their stories/experiences aloud; they may enlist the help of the student who invited them if they like. I provide time for the class as a whole to listen to the stories, react, and respond to them with questions and comments.

Depending on the students' backgrounds, and family culture, some families may not be comfortable sending items to class or submitting stories, or may not be able to submit or present stories in English.

In some cases, students in the class may be able to offer translation services. In other cases, family members may agree to be interviewed by the student from the class. Students can brainstorm questions that will elicit family stories (such as, "Has anything funny, happy, or unusual ever happened to your family while traveling? Has your family ever had a day they considered especially lucky or unlucky? How did it all start? What happened and who was involved?)

If students do not have family members readily available to provide story resources, the project can also be expanded to the local community—such as senior citizens in a retirement home or older friends from the student's church or religious community. Students can interview these volunteers or invite them to select a memorable object from their family history, prepare a story, and visit the class to tell it.

When the family members or other invited guests come to the classroom, they usually sit in a circle and, depending on the age and grade level of the participant students, the storytelling environment is created with a rug and circular chair arrangement. The example of family members serving as storytellers in an authentic circle beautifully realizes the tradition of storytelling.

As follow-up to the storytelling visits, I usually ask students to write and share their own versions of the stories that their family members told in class. Students could also be involved in dramatic reenactments of the stories. Students with access to multimedia software such as Story Book Weaver and Kids Picks could create a multimedia version of the

▶

Classroom Solutions

Showing Who We Are through a Class Quilt

There is a fabulous teacher I was fortunate enough to watch for a semester (as a student teacher) who used this quilt idea in the classroom. Her name is Charlotte Chait and she modified an idea from another teacher at Rancocas Valley High School, Mount Holly, New Jersey.

She gave each student some paper and gave them a brief outline of what to do. Each student cut-and-pasted a square of paper using whatever they wanted: pictures from magazines, home photos, drawings, paintings, etc. The students were encouraged to show themselves in their squares, what they were about, what it meant to be who they are. Then ALL of the pieces were collected and put on her HUGE bulletin board at the back of the room, creating a classroom quilt showing who everyone is. It was quite lovely.

Jennifer Fynan
canadian@nothinbut.net

stories or even a Hyperstudio stack with scenes from the stories, complete with taped narration and sound effects, and scanned photos or illustrations.

This project is an effective way of integrating family experiences meaningfully into the classroom curriculum, and involves students in many learning activities: questioning, listening, interviewing, writing and retelling stories, talking about point of view, and responding in a variety of ways to stories from their own family history.

Using the family as a resource, we can open ourselves and our classrooms to the untapped riches of authentic narrative accounts, reflecting students' cultural and ethnic backgrounds and enhancing their literacy skills.

Rose Reissman, Community School District #1, New York, New York

Teachers' Web Sites

Many teachers have created their own Web sites which include lesson plans, students' writing, and interesting collections of Web links. The following is a list of Web sites created by participants in the online discussion group NCTE-talk.

Cindy Adams: www.studyguide.org
Leslie Bradley: www.members.accessus.net/~bradley
Kelly Gleason: http://www.angelfire.com/ok/freshenglish
Sherry Godsey: http://www.sherrygodsey.com *and* http://www2.jbc.edu/Sherryspages/ (AP English resources)
Dawn Hogue: http://www.sheboyganfalls.k12.wi.us/staff/dehogue/index.htm
Connie Howell: http://english.dew-drop.com
Lori Mayo: http://www.lmayo.net/cybereng
Tom Murphy: http://brtom.org/ *and* http://brtom.org/school.html
Ted Nellen: http://www.tnellen.com/cybereng/
Sheila Newell: http://www.msnewell.com
Virena Ostrander: http://www.crosswinds.net/~msostrander
Nancy Patterson: http://www.npatterson.net/mid.html
Darcy Randle: http://www.teachers.k12.sd.us/DR022/
Laurie Russo: http://members.xoom.com/LangArtTeach/
Pat Schulze: http://www.pschulze.com/

Compiled by Sheila Newell
slnewell@teacher.esc4.com

Not Just for Elementary Students

I began my teaching career in a kindergarten classroom, then later moved into a fourth grade position. The elementary teaching strategies I used often involved concrete, kinesthetic, and visual approaches that connected with schema before moving into the abstract.

Last year I accepted a job teaching eighth grade language arts. The bodies are bigger, but I found that my students can still benefit from some of the same strategies I learned as an elementary teacher.

Initially I was concerned that my students might be reluctant to engage in some of these activities, but I soon discovered that students revel in anything they can relate to on a personal basis; they enjoy learning and making connections. And fortunately many such activities can be incorporated in daily lessons without a substantial investment of time.

In Eric Jensen's book *BRAIN COMPATIBLE STRATEGIES* (Turning Point Publishing, 1997), he offers several teacher-friendly suggestions that are great for students. Physical activity is important in every classroom. Students need to get out of their seats and move; if movement cannot be incorporated into the teaching of a particular concept, try one of Jensen's "Brain Breaks" (for example, clapping games, Gordian knot, or lap sit). These activities are designed "to let off steam and simply energize the group" (18).

The use of children's books is enrichment that requires little preparation time. I like to use children's books in conjunction with writing activities. Many times the stories will spark a memory or stimulate the imagination. The books also serve as models for writing prompts or story starters.

Music is another motivating teaching tool that elementary teachers use frequently. Why not bring music into a junior high classroom? Teenagers respond and relate to a wide variety of music. For our self-awareness unit, I ask my students to bring in compact discs and tapes with appropriate songs that represent who they are or what they dream of becoming. At other times, I use music to introduce a topic or to illustrate a concept.

What ever happened to manipulatives? Are they only for elementary math classes? Absolutely not! Manipulatives can be a magnificent tool for the middle school/junior high language arts classroom. I use strips of colored paper as manipulatives for sentence construction, pasta for punctuation, and after hearing about this idea at the New Jersey Writing Project of Texas, I plan to try using unifix cubes to color-code elaboration strategies used in writing.

Concrete, visual, and kinesthetic techniques are used successfully every day in elementary schools and have proven to be equally effective in the junior high setting. They are the blocks that build the bridge between the literal and the abstract.

Tracy Felan, Tomball Junior High School, Tomball, Texas

A Teacher Shares the Meaning of Martin Luther King Jr. Day with Her Students

I was born in Arkansas, the daughter of two African American educators. Because of their color, their salaries were lower than whites, even though both of them were working on their doctorates.

I attended segregated schools and experienced indignities: riding in the back of buses, drinking from the black fountains which, incidentally were always lower than the white ones, ignoring verbal abuse, ad infinitum, ad nauseam.

I discuss this with my students once a year. They enter the classroom every day to music that is related to whatever we are studying. On the last day of school before winter break, they enter to the strains of "Imagine" by John Lennon. I give them my holiday greetings, ending with Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Christmas Sermon on Peace."

On the last day of school before Martin Luther King Jr. Day in January, students enter again to "Imagine." Again I read King's "Christmas Sermon on Peace" before I talk with them about nonviolence, focusing on my experiences.

Occasionally, my voice weakens. Occasionally, I stop to regroup. I don't apologize, for I want them to understand the effect of that kind of violence that doesn't leave a trail of blood. I explain that my stomach ached whenever I experienced discrimination. I ask my students to think of the times that they felt that ache. I ask them not to be responsible for causing that hurt in other people.

Students' homework assignment during the long weekend is to celebrate King's life by considering how to be nonviolent when faced with problems.

When they inform me that they are not violent, I remind them: "When you sneer at one of your classmates in the hall and call her/him names because of her/his size, you're being violent. When you ridicule a classmate for wearing the same jeans that he/she wore yesterday, you're being violent..."

In sharing and discussion after the holiday weekend, we focus on the hurt that is caused by all kinds of discrimination and the ways we can combat discrimination and learn nonviolence.

Jessyca Pearson Yucas
F4J@aol.com

FOCUS ON MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

How We Are White

This article is reprinted with permission from TEACHING TOLERANCE *(Fall 2000). Visit the* TEACHING TOLERANCE *Web page at http://www.splcenter.org/teachingtolerance/tt-index.html.*

The break is over, and I am ready to begin the second half of a four-hour multicultural curriculum workshop. Twenty-five teachers and staff are scrunched into 2nd grade desks, all eyes and White faces turned toward their one African American colleague, who has asked to address the group. He announces that he will be leaving this workshop immediately and resigning from his position at the end of the year. He has lost hope in their willingness and ability to deal with issues of race.

After he leaves, a painful silence grips the room. I realize my planned agenda is no longer appropriate. Gradually the participants begin to talk. Their comments are rife with guilt, shame, anger, blame, denial, sadness, confusion and frustration. It becomes clear there has been a long history leading to this moment. Together they are experiencing a collective meltdown over the realities of race and their own Whiteness. One faculty member remarks, "I feel so helpless. What am I supposed to do as a White teacher?"

In my 25 years of work in multicultural education, I have encountered an almost universal uneasiness about race among White educators. Since the publication of my book *WE CAN'T TEACH WHAT WE DON'T KNOW: WHITE TEACHERS, MULTIRACIAL SCHOOLS,* many people have shared their stories with me. A White teacher from California reports, "I realize that I have contributed to the failure of my students of color by not being able to drop the mask of privilege that I wear. Another White teacher writes, "I thought I was going crazy. It was helpful to hear that other white teachers feel similar confusion."

As White educators, we are collectively bound and unavoidably complicit in the arrangements of dominance that

▶

Web Sites Related to the Life and Work of Martin Luther King Jr.

The inspiring words and achievements of Martin Luther King Jr. are a valuable topic for study at any time of the year. Here are Web sites containing helpful resources.

THE SEATTLE TIMES site contains links to The Man, The Movement, The Legacy, The Holiday, The Electronic Classroom, and Talking about It.

http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/mlk/man/index.html

The *LIFE MAGAZINE* site includes a Martin Luther King Jr. page with many photos.

http://pathfinder.com/Life/mlk/mlk.html

The Martin Luther King Jr. Center in Atlanta has created this excellent site containing many documents and links.

http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/

Black History Month Web Sites

Black History Month: A Celebration

http://www.kron.com/specials/blackhistory/home.html

Send Free E-mail Greeting Cards Depicting Notable African Americans

http://www.bluemountain.com/eng3/african/index.html

have systematically favored our racial group over others. In my own family, the farm in Minnesota that I cherish as part of our heritage was actually stolen from the Ojibway people only a few years before my great-grandparents acquired it. This is only one of countless ways I am inextricably tied to privilege. I did not personally take the land, yet I continue to benefit from its possession.

But privilege and complicity are only part of the story. The police officers who brutally assaulted civil rights activists during the Selma march in 1965 were certainly White, but so were many of the marchers who stood on the Edmund Pettus Bridge with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on that awful Sunday. It is true that three White men dragged James Byrd to a horrific death in Jasper, Texas, but it is also true that many White townspeople and a predominantly White jury condemned this act of racist violence.

In the course of my work and personal reflection, I have discovered there are many ways of being White. Some Whites are bound to a *fundamentalist White orientation*. They view the world through a single lens that is always right and always White. White supremacist hate groups represent one particularly hostile form of fundamentalist White orientation, but there is also an uninformed and well-intentioned version that simply has never been exposed to other perspectives. This was my orientation from birth through my high school years, when I had never met a person who wasn't White. Fundamentalist White teachers often say, "I don't see color. I treat all my students alike."

Other Whites live from an *integrationist White orientation*, where differences are acknowledged and tolerated but still not fully accepted. Integrationist Whites are self-congratulatory in their apparent openness to racial differences, yet often paternalistic and condescending toward people of color. In this way of being White, we prefer to keep the peace, avoid confrontation and maintain control, rather than actually get to the core of our separate truths and unique racial perspectives. Integrationist White teachers say to students of color, "I know how you feel," even when we have no real connection to their reality. This was my orientation when I first began "helping" Black kids in the ghetto in the 1960s. I thought I was the answer, rather than the question.

Finally, there is *transformationist White identity*, which is a place of humility and active engagement in one's own continuing growth and reformation. Transformationist Whites have acquired a paradoxical identity, which allows us to acknowledge our inevitable privilege and racism while at the same time actively working to dismantle our legacy of dominance. Transformationist White teachers know it is our place and our responsibility to engage issues of race and multicultural education in the classroom.

White educators do have a choice to grow beyond our ignorance, denial and guilt. There is a journey, which I envision as a river that carries us through many confusing currents and treacherous rapids, but which eventually can lead to a place of authentic multicultural White identity. Ultimately, good teaching is not a function of the color of our skin. It is much more closely related to the temperament of our mind and the hue of our heart. We did not choose *whether* to be White, but we can affect *how* we are White. This is both our challenge and our hope.

In the last few years I have returned several times to work with the staff who experienced such a painful meltdown over issues of race. With courage they have stayed on the river, chosen to look deeply into the reflective pool of their own difficult history together, and have come to a place of hon-

►

esty and renewed commitment to a multicultural vision for their school.

At our last meeting, when the painful event was alluded to in discussion, a newly hired Asian American teacher asked, "What happened?" A veteran White teacher responded, "It's a long story we need to share with you. It will help you know who we are."

Gary Howard is currently President of the REACH Center for Multicultural Education in Seattle. He is the author of WE CAN'T TEACH WHAT WE DON'T KNOW, available from REACH at reach@nwlink.com or (206) 545-4977.

Call for Lesson Plans on the Civil Rights Movement

The Network of Educators on the Americas (NECA) and the Poverty and Race Research Action Council (PRRAC) invite you to submit lesson plans or articles for Putting the Movement back into Civil Rights Teaching, a curriculum guide that will present the Civil Rights Movement as it truly was: communities mobilizing for social justice, human dignity, and full citizenship.

As one of the most commonly taught stories of people's struggles for social justice, the Civil Rights Movement has the capacity to help students develop a critical analysis of racism and resistance. Regrettably, in too many schools today, the complexity of the movement is reduced to a trivial pursuit of names and dates.

This publication will describe how the Movement involved thousands of ordinary people and organizations, not merely a few exceptional leaders. In addition, the publication will demonstrate the relationship between the historical Civil Rights Movement and modern activism. The publication's other central themes include:

- The multiple strategies used during the Civil Rights Movement.
- The Movement prior to the 1950s and its continuation today.
- The Movement's impact on other social and liberation movements.
- The creation and role of culture in the Movement.

We seek interactive, interdisciplinary lessons (language arts, social studies, art, science, math, etc.), readings, writings, photographs, graphics, and/or interviews for consideration. Our goal is to make the book available by the summer of 2001. Submit materials to, or contact for more information: Rishi Awatramani, NECA/Teaching for Change, P.O. Box 73038, Washington, DC 20056; Telephone: 202-588-7204; 800-763-9131; e-mail: rishia@teachingforchange.org. Web site: http://www.teachingforchange.org.

FOCUS ON TEACHING ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST

Editor's note: This themed section on Teaching about the Holocaust continues through page 29.

Always Remember, Never Forget

More than 50 years have passed since World War II and the Holocaust, yet these events have important implications for our lives today. Through education, we can examine the moral issues, investigate the human behavior behind the Holocaust, and explore what it means to be a responsible citizen. Thus, future generations will seek an end to racial hatred, genocide and violence.

The systematic, bureaucratic annihilation of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and their collaborators was one of the most horrific events in the entire history of the world. To not give our children a thorough understanding of the Holocaust would itself be a tragedy. But how do we approach the lessons? The Web provides an excellent resource for studying the Holocaust, carefully planning lessons and teaching tolerance.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (http://www.ushmm.org/) is an excellent starting point for gathering background history about the Holocaust, and the educational resources published online at the museum are vast. Educators will find "Five Questions About the Holocaust" useful as it breaks down and simplifies some basic questions. Teachers might suggest this particular page to parents whose students are studying the Holocaust, as it will provide valuable information for them, as well.

Guidelines for Teaching about the Holocaust

Teachers are urged to read the "Guidelines for Teaching About the Holocaust" at http:// www.ushmm.org/education/guidelines.html before designing their curriculum. This page addresses the concerns educators may have about introducing students to the horrors of the Holocaust. In addition, the guidelines provide objectives that encourage students to

▶

think critically, grow personally and act responsibly. The various objectives teach the ramifications of prejudice, racism and stereotyping, as well as tolerance, the dangers of remaining silent, abuse of power, and the final results of the Holocaust. Several other tips and resources found here will enhance teaching in the classroom and understanding among your students.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center, headquartered in Los Angeles, is an international center for Holocaust remembrance. At http://www.wiesenthal.com/, 36 frequently asked questions about the Holocaust are featured. Teachers, parents, and students will find these to be helpful. In conjunction with the Simon Wiesenthal Center, the Museum of Tolerance introduces an online glossary of terms, places, and personalities. These glossary terms can be used in a lesson where students match definitions with corresponding glossary words. Also, this site contains the biographies of children who experienced the Holocaust. Their moving memories are a testimony of the extent of this atrocity.

We have all heard that a picture is worth a thousand words. Take a virtual tour of the exhibit, "The Courage to Remember," which features over 200 original photographs accompanied by powerful quotes. Each picture offers compelling insight into the Holocaust by incorporating images from the rise of Nazi Germany to the liberation of concentration camps.

Yad Vashem, Israel's Museum and Memorial dedicated to the victims of the Holocaust, has a web site at http://www.yad-vashem.org.il/. Photographs and excerpts from survivor testimony transcripts are available, and students can visit the virtual exhibit on the liberation of the concentration camps. From the "School of Holocaust Education," teachers will benefit from curricular units that have been tailored to various age groups and developed by a team of educators, psychologists and historians.

Probably the largest web site on the Holocaust is the Cybrary of the Holocaust at http://www.remember.org. Not only is there general background history and answers to frequently asked questions, but teachers, parents and students can survey transcripts of Nazi speeches and official documents, historical photos, artwork, and poetry. Furthermore, there is a comprehensive list of books written by survivors and links to other Holocaust web pages.

For more classroom instruction, review "Education: A Legacy Forum for Teachers" (http://www.remember.org/educate/index.html) which features many useful ideas and lessons.

David Dickerson's Holocaust Homepage at http://www.igc.apc.org/ddickerson/holocaust.html is categorized into sections such as "Education Projects," "Third Reich," "Survivors," and "Rescuers." All categories have well-annotated links to other web sites relating to the Holocaust, anti-Semitism and Jewish culture and history.

For additional Holocaust related issues, the Anti-Defamation League monitors news releases and posts them frequently at http://www.adl.org. This site is dedicated to promoting diversity and combating prejudice and bigotry.

Books, Activities, Lessons

In middle school, the Holocaust is often taught with *THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK*. Supplement this reading with either the Anne Frank web page at http://www.annefrank.com/ or the Anne Frank House at http://www.annefrank.nl. Both are dedicated to the brief, but inspiring life of Anne Frank and her writings. At the Anne Frank web page, the events behind her stories are revealed, and selected entries to her diary are available online. The Anne Frank House is a museum and memorial located in Amsterdam at the house where Anne and her family hid.

Many middle and high school students are now reading *NIGHT* by Elie Wiesel as a supplement to the Holocaust unit. *NIGHT* is Wiesel's unique perspective through the eyes of a Holocaust survivor. This powerful and candid book tells his story from the onset of the ghettos to the liberation of the concentration camps. Two excellent units for this book are online. The SCORE (Schools of California Online Resources for Educators) Project site (http://www.sdcoe.kl2.ca.us/score/night/nighttg.html) has a unit which is designed so that students use the Internet with each activity.

James Madison University's Elie Wiesel: Teacher Resource File compiles his biography, historical criticism of *NIGHT*, units, and general Holocaust history. Most educators will benefit from reading the historical criticisms of *Night* in preparation for teaching with the book. This site is located at http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/wiesel.htm.

A copy of this article with live links is posted on the CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS site. Reprinted with permission from ONLINE EDUCATOR (Feburary 1999). (*ONLINE EDUCATOR* has changed its name and moved to an online format at http://www.learnersonline.com.)

Facing History and Ourselves

Facing History and Ourselves is an organization that helps teachers and students examine racism, prejudice, and anti-Semitism in an effort to help connect history with the moral choices we make. The group offers study guides and resources for teachers and also conducts professional development workshops nationwide. For more information about the organization, as well as a complete listing of workshops, visit the Web site at http://www.facing.org.

TEACHER TALK

Clarifying Goals for Teaching the Holocaust

I need some feedback. One of my "dreams" is to teach a Holocaust literature unit. I'm in the information and materials gathering stage. What I have so far is Wiesel's NIGHT, the collection of poems I NEVER SAW ANOTHER BUTTERFLY, and some pieces from the Internet.

One of the reasons I want to do the unit is because NIGHT had such a profound effect on me as a reader, and I want to share that experience with students. I also believe that students are "disconnected" from such events. Even recent accounts of genocide and ethnic cleansing in places like Kosovo don't seem to have an effect on some students. Perhaps such events take place too far from us and are therefore too remote.

I need help clarifying my goals and learning outcomes. Second, I need some advice about materials. I am thinking of doing this with my senior English class first and then expanding to American literature classes (11th grade).

Olivia S. Fulmer
ofulmer@logicsouth.com

I have taught the Holocaust at both middle and high school. On my web page, you will find two different units—the unit I taught this year (with supporting activities) and a unit I wrote as a grad student for a "thematic book." All can be found at http://www.geocities.com/mirehol/index.html.

Keep in mind (probably for next year) that the Holocaust Museum of Houston has a "trunk" of materials they will send out for a month at a time—includes class sets of several books (including NIGHT and I NEVER SAW ANOTHER BUTTERFLY), Resource Guides, videos, CDs, posters, etc. There is no cost—they even pay shipping, but you do need to arrange for it in advance.

My kids this year watched THE DEVIL'S ARITHMETIC and A SURVIVOR REMEMBERS. They did a research brochure on either the Holocaust or prejudice, wrote an essay comparing the death march described in NIGHT to the death march described in MAUS, prepared journals as if they were either Wiesel or one of his companions, and did free writes in response to prompts I read them about "other Holocausts" (Kosovo, our treatment of Native Americans, etc.)— in each case, they had to write about whether what I described occurred during the Holocaust and explain why or why not.

We also had a speaker in. They created their own butterflies (I NEVER SAW ANOTHER BUTTERFLY) interpreting different poems, which are now "flying" about our ceiling.

All of the above took about five to six weeks. Tomorrow, I have a workshop so I left them LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL to watch. When we come back, we will spend one more week on the Holocaust—studying the one-act play, JOURNEY OF THE BUTTERFLY, and learning of the fate of authors of their butterfly poems. Sorry if this sounds jumbled—there's just so much material. Take some time to figure out what you want the students to get out of the study.

To my way of thinking, the Holocaust requires anywhere from six to eight weeks. In my case, it will run a little over seven. The research project, reviewing the research process, embedding quotations, preparing a works cited and bibliography all take time, and I had decided in advance to schedule the kids for three days in the library and seven days in the computer lab.

Michelle Garbis
mirehol@netrox.net

I teach the Holocaust because I want my students to explore what it means to be a human being.

I teach the Holocaust because I want students to see that it didn't have to happen; it happened because too many people did nothing to stop it.

I teach the Holocaust because I want my students to see that apathy leads to dangerous consequences.

I teach the Holocaust because it can happen again and has happened again.

I teach the Holocaust because I want students to see that the potential for evil is in everyone of us as well as the potential for great good.

I teach the Holocaust to show students that one person can make a difference!

I teach students the history of the Holocaust because those that do not know history are condemned to repeat it.

I teach the Holocaust because I do not want the voices of those 11 million to be silenced forever.

I'll share a story with you that I always share with my students. In 1997, I traveled to Poland and Israel with a group of educators sponsored by the Jewish Labor Committee and survivor Vladka Meed. While we were studying at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, Auschwitz survivor Ruth Brand shared some of her experiences with our group. At the end of her talk, one of the teachers asked if she wanted revenge.

She answered, "My life is my revenge against Hitler. My daughters-in-law and their daughters are my revenge against Hitler. And now, each one of you is a small piece of revenge against Hitler because you now know my story. It is your responsibility to share this story and the lessons with your students."

▶

I always end the story by telling my students that they are now small pieces of revenge against Hitler, and they have a responsibility to prevent that from happening. It drives home the "why study the Holocaust?" lesson for them. I work hard to show students that this is not just something that happened some 55 years ago. It has relevance for today.

Valerie Person
sestina1@hotmail.com

If you go to http://www.holocaust-trc.org/lesson.htm there are many lesson plans for the Holocaust. There is one plan called Surviving Hatred which is extremely interesting.

The butterfly poem is also at http://www.euronet.nl/users/jubo/butterfly.html

Brenda H. Alcorn
BHAlcorn47@aol.com

Whatever you decide to include in your unit, it is very important that you make sure the students have a strong background in the events leading up to the Holocaust as well as those last years of the war itself when the Holocaust itself was in full gear.

The gradual and concerted effort to dehumanize and isolate the Jewish population took place over a 10-year period prior to the events we refer to as the Holocaust. Solid background will help make the works of literature much more meaningful.

I usually start with a PowerPoint presentation giving the factual background, and follow that up with the video *Survivors of the Holocaust*, which Steven Spielberg put together to promote the work of the Shoah Foundation (a worldwide program of videotaping interviews with survivors).

The video is in two parts. The first half hour is a plug for the work of the foundation. (I don't show that part.) The second part consists of interviews with survivors. This is a very powerful video, deeply moving. After that, I believe the students are ready to seriously tackle the literature.

As to why you might want to teach a literature unit on the Holocaust, that is an important question. Possibly to teach the students how ignorance, fear, intolerance, and xenophobia—when unchallenged and unchecked—can lead to unbelievable death and destruction.

You might want to move from the Holocaust study to looking at some of the recent events of "ethnic cleansing," hate crimes, and school violence, and then have the students try to think of what they can do to make their own world (their school) a safer and more welcoming environment for everyone.

There is a video called *Not In Our Town* which highlights one community's efforts to thwart racism and acts of intolerance. It is very upbeat and hopeful, and it could lead into a project called Not In Our School.

Howard Miller
MiddleDoc@aol.com

What I also think is important is the realization that in 1850, most German states had ratified legislation that considered Jews and Christians equal before the law. That little piece of information might help those who think staunchly that this kind of thing cannot possibly happen in a "civilized" country protected by legislation and an often blindly worshipped "constitution."

Reinhold Schlieper
schliepr@db.erau.edu

I'm in the middle of a Holocaust Unit with my 8th graders. It's been going very well. Students have been doing literature circles in groups of three to four. Book choices were: Anne Frank's diary, *Night*, *We Are Witnesses (5 Diaries Of Young People)*, *I Have Lived a Million Years*, *Children of the Holocaust*, *The Hiding Place*, *The Cage*, and *Alicia, My Story*.

I did the butterfly activity that was posted on this listserv (see page 20 of this issue) and we have butterflies fluttering above us. Each group has done a presentation of their book for the class. Most made posters, some did reader's theater with sections of books, and two groups made a video. I was pleased with their efforts. ▶

Mandel Teacher Fellowship Program

Up to twenty-five educators in seventh- through twelfth-grade will serve as leaders in Holocaust education in their communities and be designated as Mandel Fellows through the Mandel Teacher Fellowship Program. The Fellows will attend an all-expense paid summer institute at the United States Holocaust Museum, create and implement an outreach project in their areas, and attend a follow-up program at the Museum to asses their efforts.

Applicants should have extensive knowledge of Holocaust history, successful teaching experience, and participation in community and professional organizations. They must teach in United States schools and have taught the Holocaust for a minimum of five years.

The deadline for applications is February 16, 2001.

For more information visit http://www.ushmm.org/education/mandel/index.html or contact Daniel Napolitano at 202-314-7853 or dnapolitano@ushmm.org.

On Monday they all have a research project due, and I required that they find three internet sites and three non-internet sites and to prepare a bibliography. I have one group making a beautiful quilt. They are dedicating it to the victims of the Holocaust and are using iron-on transfer paper to iron on pictures, excerpts from diaries, and some original poetry.

Another group is preparing a photo album type of diary that has been going very well. A couple of groups are filming videos this weekend. Another group is planning a ceremony for Holocaust Remembrance Day and we are all going to participate in the ceremony on Tuesday.

Also helpful has been a video made by Steven Spielberg called The Shoah in which he has interviewed many Holocaust survivors. We also watched the video of The Devil's Arithmetic that a student taped for me off HBO last year. It's based on the book by Jane Yolen, but the main character, played by Kirsten Dunst, is older than the character in the book and teenagers can relate better.

Jan Stover
Jetstover@aol.com

Check out The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness, by Simon Wiesenthal.

Summary: While imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp, Wiesenthal was taken one day from his work detail to the bedside of a dying member of the SS. Haunted by the crimes in which he had participated, the soldier wanted to confess to and obtain absolution from a Jew. Faced with the choice between compassion and justice, silence and truth, Wiesenthal said nothing. But even years after the war had ended, he wondered: Had he done the right thing?

Also look for Holocaust Poetry, compiled by Hilda Schiff; We Are Witnesses: Five Diaries of Teenagers Who Died in the Holocaust by Jacob Boas; and Witnesses to the Holocaust: An Oral History, Rhoda G. Lewin, ed. All of these are excerpt-able. I'd strongly suggest that you do show Schindler's List. It's well worth going through the hassle of getting permission slips, I think, because it gets through to high school students.

Kathy Juarez
kjuarez@sonic.net

I ran into a beautiful children's picture book called My Secret Camera: Life in the Lodz Ghetto, photographs by Mendel Grossman, text by Rabbi Frank Dabba Smith. The black and white photos in this book found by the author of the text had been hidden or lost since Grossman died in 1945, days before the Germans surrendered. He, together with his family, was confined in the Lodz Ghetto where he secretly took thousands of photos of ghetto life. I read it to my seniors while we were reading The Chosen.

Adrienne Rose
arose@sonic.net

Show students the HBO video One Survivor Remembers—it's Gerda Weissmann Klein's story. It is entirely documentary—about an hour long with flashbacks. My kids were so mesmerized, they didn't even move when the bell rang.

Michelle Garbis
mirehol@netrox.net

Has anyone read or had students read Han Nolan's If I Should Die Before I Wake? It's a Holocaust story. Hilary, who has been in an accident that put her in a coma but left her neo-Nazi boyfriend unharmed, takes on and relives the adolescent life of Chana, an elderly Jewish woman in the next bed at the hospital. As she becomes Chana, she learns about the indignities and degradations that Jews suffered, and she becomes more empathetic. This brief summary makes it sound too simple; the book is much more complex and is just beautiful. A sophomore I know read through it "in like three days; I couldn't put it down." I couldn't put it down, either.

Louann Reid
Lreidcsu@aol.com

For those looking to add another facet to their study of the Holocaust and Night, there is a haunting song by the Indigo Girls called "This Train—Revised" from their Swamp Ophelia CD. The lyrics might not be appropriate for all classes.

Mary Hassenplug
Doyourhw@aol.com

Below please find the URL for my Web site entitled "Books and Web sites About the Holocaust for Young Adults." The target audience is grades 9–12; but many of the titles can be used with intermediate grades. Additionally, please note the following: 1. The website is primarily a reference guide for using the print materials and is annotated in depth; 2. I have listed additional titles which do need annotations (but have read and would recommend all titles); 3. I have used all materials in the Web site in developing thematic units for schools and book talks for the general public.

The URL is: http://www.euronet.nl/users/jubo/holocaust.html

Karen L. Simonetti
klsimonetti@earthlink.net

A Silent Warm-Up

This exercise can be used as an introduction to any study of Holocaust literature. The Holocaust can be a difficult subject for students to discuss, because of the strong subject matter itself and because many students have only minimal knowledge and vague impressions about what happpened. In order for my students to have a good opening discussion of the topic, I have found it helps to have students think about related issues on their own before we have a whole class discussion. This silent writing exercise serves the purpose well.

I can't give credit for this idea because I don't remember where I first heard of it, but I believe it could be effective at almost any level.

The idea is for students to answer questions silently in writing. On large sheets of poster paper, I post questions I want the students to think about around the room, so that students have a chance to move around to write their answers. The exercise usually takes one full period—a ninety minute block in our case—for all the students to answer the questions, and we have the discussion on the following school day.

This format gives the students time to think about the issues; it also gives every student something to say, so that even students who don't usually participate are more likely to contribute.

I use the following questions in this order:

1. What does the saying mean: "Man is his own worst enemy?" Do you agree?
2. What is meant by the term "hate crime?"
3. What are some reasons for hatred among people and groups?
4. When the law of a country is surrendered (does not operate), what happens to that country?
5. If we were all alike, would we get along better? Why or why not?
6. Consider your own life. Have you ever found that your personal differences have caused you friction with others? Are you ever intolerant of the personal differences of others? If someone were intolerant of a friend of yours, would you defend your friend?
7. Look up the definitions for these terms and write them down: racism; sexism; anti-semitism; ageism; classism.
8. How does racism play a role in human destructivness? What about sexism? Anti-semitism? Ageism? Classism? Can you think of any other "-isms?"
9. Our nation's media, movies, and television shows seem to be obsessed with violence and destruction. Can you think of any reasons why this might be?
10. Is our nation's fascination with destruction a positive or negative influence on human affairs? Explain your position.
11. What are some examples of genocide or human rights abuses happening now in the world, the nation, the state, and/or the local area?
12. What, in your opinion, was the worst crime ever committed against humanity? State your reasoning.
13. What is a holocaust? When did the European Holocaust occur?
14. How would you feel if your friend or neighbor—who was of another color, race, religion, or nationality—suddenly disappeared? Would you question what happened? Would you care?
15. If you knew that the building for which you were the architect, plumber, bricklayer, carpenter, electrician, or plasterer was going to be used to murder innocent people, what would you do?
16. What are the consequences of silence?
17. Ask yourself: What do I want to know about the Holocaust?

Robin Wolcott, Mancos High School, Mancos, Colorado

LEARNING
FROM THE
Holocaust

A trip to 4 countries.

July 12-22, 2001

Lesley University
travel arrangements through
the National Education
Travel Council

An Educational experience in:
Germany, Poland,
Denmark and *Holland*

Graduate credit available

Call or write to Barbara Vacarr at
800/999-1959 ext. 8469 or
617/349-8469 or bvacarr@lesley.edu

LESLEY

Lesley College, 29 Everett St., Cambridge, MA 02138

Correspondence in a Concentration Camp

In the *Teaching Guidelines* section of its Resource Book for Educators, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum provides fourteen methodological considerations. One is, "Translate statistics into people."

One effective method for doing this could be for a teacher, instead of simply telling students that more than 1.25 million people were exterminated at the Auschwitz-Birkenau killing center, to have her students read and discuss the life of Vladek Spiegelman. Spiegelman's son, noted comic book artist, Art Spiegelman, devoted several years of his life to writing and illustrating two graphic novels about Vladek's experiences in Auschwitz: *Maus, A Survivor's Tale Volume 1: My Father Bleeds History* and *Maus, A Survivor's Tale Volume 2: And Here My Troubles Began*.

Spiegelman uses a unique visual metaphor to highlight the predatory relationship between Hitler's executioners and the Jewish people. Twisting the Nazi stereotype of the Jew as filthy vermin, Spiegelman presents his father and other Jews as anthropomorphized mice. Instead of humans denigrated as animals, they are animals elevated to human status. The Nazis, in turn, are transformed into menacing cat-headed humanoids whose fangs show when they shout, "*Schnell! Schnell!*" With the metaphor, Spiegelman tells the tale of how his father, Vladek, gets separated from his beloved wife, Anja, endures the tortures of life in concentration camps, and searches for Anja after the war.

Graphic novels are an offshoot of the comic book genre. Though both tell stories by marrying art and text in a series of panels, a graphic novel is distinguishable from a comic book in two ways. One, it is a self-contained story, not part of an ongoing monthly series. Two, it is not bound with staples. The length of a graphic novel requires it be bound with the traditional glue-based spine.

In my experience, students respond positively to the novelty of reading a comic book in the classroom. Comic books are often dismissed as crude and escapist. I have a distinct memory of my sixth grade teacher snatching an *X-Men* comic book from my hands, then adding, "These are not allowed in school."

Yet being able to understand how words and images can be combined and juxtaposed is an important skill for navigating the information logjam of the 21st century. Refinement of this skill needs to occur. It cannot begin and end with picture books in the early elementary years. Comic books are the next logical step.

Even though the form has acted as a scapegoat for the shortcomings of teenagers, comic books can be used to explore the weightier issues that have perplexed humanity. Susan T. Goodman, Senior Curator at Large for the Jewish Museum, New York City, describes *Maus* as "a compelling visual document. . . . The tiny animal figures that move, dress, and speak like human beings become a metaphor for the Jewish experience."

I spent four years teaching seventh grade English at a middle school in Houston, Texas. Many of my students had recently completed the school's ESL program. *Maus* was a perfect text for them. The reading level and content were challenging, but the comic book format made the story accessible.

Labeling objects in the classroom is one strategy used by ESL teachers. Through this practice, students new to the English language learn simple but relevant words like "clock" and "desk." A comic book is a more complex version of this. The relationship between the words and pictures is not always one-to-one. When my students were done reading *Maus*, they had images for abstract concepts like "World War II" and "Holocaust," "Nazism" and "Judaism."

To illustrate for my students that reading can inspire writing, we paused after reading the third chapter of *And Here My Troubles Began*. In the chapter, Spiegelman's parents, Vladek and Anja, begin corresponding with the help of another female prisoner. Anja's first letter is quoted at length. In the panel depicting this, Vladek is standing in his barrack holding the letter with both hands, his head tipped down in anticipation.

Like a sheet of paper that has landed casually onto a desk, the narration box containing Vladek's recollection overlaps the drawing at a bit of an angle. It reads: "'I miss you,' she wrote to me. 'Each day I think to run into the electric wires and finish everything. But to know you are alive it gives me still to hope.'"

References are made later in the book to other letters but none are quoted from. Their content is a mystery. I asked my students to solve that mystery by composing fictional letters using the voices of Vladek and Anja. Writing such letters entails a variety of skills, most notably the ability to make logical inferences.

In their book, *Student-Centered Language Arts, K–12*, James Moffett and Betty Jane Wagner write, "The author of a two-way correspondence has to create two or more 'letter-voices,' one for each character, and carry on a story by implication. The reader may need to read a considerable amount between the lines—between the letters."

They later assert that these letters "create multiple, interacting monologues among any number of people and a complicated skein of relationships as some write to each other and some *about* each other."

Here is a letter by Anja as imagined by a student of mine named Zuleyma:

> Dear Vladek,
>
> I miss you. Each day I think to run into the electric wires and finish everything. But to know you are alive it gives me still to hope. My Kapo is very mean to me and

▶

gives me work I can't do. She makes me run from the kitchen with the big cans of soup. I can't hold the cans very well so I always spilled some soup on the floor. The Kapo beat me very hard but I kept my job. If I spilled all the soup then, nobody gets to eat anything especially me. The cans are very heavy and I can't hold them very well. I feel very weak. Its impossible for me to do this. I'm really scared Vladek. I'm really scared I wont see you again. I tried to go near the barracks because I can't stand this. I don't think I can take this anymore. When the Kapo caught me getting near the barrack she beat me up. She had leather boots. They are in a very bad shape. I told her that you are a shoemaker so please here I send you her boots. Please fix them. Maybe that way she will treat me better. Thanks to Mancie we can write to each other. Vladek thank you for the piece of bread you send me with Mancie. I have to go now. Don't forget that I love you and I can't wait to see you again and be together forever. Please write back.

I'll always love you,

Anja

In writing a letter as Anja, Zuleyma participated in the act of telling Vladek's story. She acted as not just a reader of history, but also as a writer of history. Vladek and Anja were transformed from two victims among the millions into two people who cleverly and tenaciously fought to help each other survive.

Don Leibold, Loyola Academy High School, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

TEACHER TALK

Suggestions for Nonfiction Related to the Holocaust

I have been concerned in recent years that I was doing little nonfiction with my students. I decided to try to find five or six nonfiction books on the Holocaust to use with my ninth grade students. So far I have selected NIGHT, ANNE FRANK, and THE HIDING PLACE. Does anyone have any suggestions for two or three additional titles I might use?

Contributed to NCTE-talk
engteacher426@yahoo.com

For autobiographical material, try Gerda Weissmann Klein's autobiography, entitled ALL BUT MY LIFE. (Visit the CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS Web site to read a talk Kleins gave as the NCTE Fund speaker at the 1996 NCTE Annual Convention in Chicago.)

Other autobiographies are Simon Wiesenthal's THE SUNFLOWER, Arnost Lustig's DARKNESS CASTS NO SHADOW, Primo Levi's THE PERIODIC TABLE (more difficult) and Elie Wiesel's ONE GENERATION AFTER (a series of short pieces). Besides NIGHT there is his companion piece DAWN, and others, including THE GATES OF THE FOREST and, I think, THE TOWN BEYOND THE WALL.

Two anthologies that I don't think have been mentioned are OUT OF THE WHIRLWIND, edited by Albert H. Friedlander, and Gerd Korman's HUNTER AND HUNTED: A HUMAN HISTORY OF THE HOLOCAUST.

Anita Hoffman Ehrenfried
jbpotter@earthlink.net

THAT I MIGHT LIVE, another book by Gerda Weissmann Klein, is a good choice.

Brenda Mahaney
bmahaney@erinet.com

I suggest Olga Lengyel's FIVE CHIMNEYS. It's longer than NIGHT, but it provides a woman's perspective from inside a camp. If I'm remembering right, it would be fine for eighth and ninth graders to read, though it's been a while.

Ginger K. Ogle
englishrules@earthlink.net

I just bought an anthology of Holocaust literature that includes prose fiction and nonfiction, drama, and poetry. It's title is ART FROM THE ASHES. I haven't read very much of it, but there are nonfiction selections by Wiesel and others, including a few paragraphs by some of the commanders of concentration camps. From Amazon.com, it was about $23.00. It's worth a look.

Olivia Fulmer
ofulmer@mx.logicsouth.com

Here is a Web site that I used when I planned a Holocaust unit for an English Methods class.

http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu/Holocaust

It has an annotated list of books, including "Historical References," on the Books page at http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu/Holocaust/resource/books.htm. It might help you—it sure helped me.

Holly Warren
dnerraw@hotmail.com

I developed a unit on the Holocaust that provides suggested books and annotated bibliographies. You can access it on my home page at http://www.geocities.com/paris/gallery/5591/.

Michelle Garbis
mirehol@netrox.net

Tips

Literature and Lessons of the Holocaust: Theory and Practice—An Excerpt from A Middle Mosaic

by Marlene B. Hartstein and Karen Zelde Schejtman Sultan

In a world of increasing racial, ethnic, and religious hostility, the story of the Holocaust is an important tool to help children understand the implications of hatred. In 1993, these considerations led the National Council of Teachers of English to affirm that "students should read and discuss literature on genocide and intolerance within an historically accurate framework, with special emphasis on primary materials" (Goldberg, 1995, p. 104).

Middle school English teachers have the opportunity to use young adult literature of the Holocaust to prepare "caring ethical individual(s), [who are] able to recognize that there is good and bad, and that it is possible and important to tell the difference" (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989, p. 15).

What can prepare a teacher to face the particular paradoxes and ironies of teaching Holocaust literature? How can a teacher guide the reading of stories that can hardly be told, yet must be told? How does a teacher design lessons to answer unanswerable questions, to show how language can mask as well as reveal, and to lead a class to approach the core of evil in hopes of discovering the essence of goodness?

There are no simplistic answers to explain such complex historical events as the Holocaust. Certainly, there is no answer to a common question, "How could people do such a thing?" In the face of such questions, teachers may take heart and courage from the words of Moche the Beadle (quoted in Night), who believed that "every question possessed a power that did not lie in the answer" (Mahle, 1985, p. 84). How does an English teacher, though, start to select the right books for the classroom? What strategies and guidelines see a class through reading some of the darkest and brightest chapters in history?

Materials

The themes inherent in young adult literature of the Holocaust address the classic themes English teachers regularly teach, and ones that young adults confront in their daily lives: identity, peer pressure, conformity, justice, coming of age, friendship, loyalty, prejudice, moral choices, and survival. The genre is likewise all-encompassing and familiar: poetry, fiction, biography, autobiography, drama, and so on. Literature of the Holocaust has its own classics, for example, *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*, *Night*, and *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*. Also, many new works stand out, for example, *I Have Lived a Thousand Years* and *Light from the Yellow Star: A Lesson of Love from the Holocaust*. *Friedrich*, *The Devil's Arithmetic* and *Number the Stars* span reading, maturity, and interest levels; and picture books such as *Rose Blanche* make good read-alouds for a shared experience. The allegory of *Terrible Things* provides a simple beginning for a study.

Criteria for selection are easily recognizable: quality works that are age-appropriate, in which the history is accurate and the characters authentic; and stories that elicit respect and understanding and allow readers to draw their own conclusions. A short guide from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (available for free), *Teaching about the Holocaust*, provides an annotated bibliography as well as vocabulary, a time line of history, and a list of other resources.

Strategies for Teaching the Holocaust

A review of history, establishing a theoretical base, provides a strong introduction to Holocaust literature and will inform and set a reflective tone. Teachers may first want to present Allport's Five Levels of Prejudice:

1. Name calling: the stereotyping of an entire group
2. Isolation: the separation of the group from society
3. Discrimination: legal isolation
4. Physical attack
5. Extermination

The teacher can then move to reviewing the history and the time line of events ranging from the end of World War I to the end of World War II. Teachers posting a time line of significant events should remind students that often the protagonists, Anne Frank, for one, were unaware of all that was happening. . . .

—from "Literature and Lessons of the Holocaust: Theory and Practice," by Marlene B. Hartstein and Karen Zelde Schejtman Sultan. This article appears as chapter five in *A Middle Mosaic*, edited by Elizabeth Close and Katherine D. Ramsey (NCTE, 2000).

Read the full article at http://www.ncte.org/notesplus.

WEB LINKS RELATED TO THE HOLOCAUST

The following sites contain information, graphics, and teaching resources related to the Holocaust. Many of these links were compiled by librarian Sue Stoller and posted to NCTE-talk by Katherine Steinbring.

A longer version of this list with live links (including the sites in "Always Remember, Never Forget" on page 10 of this issue) appears on the CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS Web page at http://www.ncte.org/notesplus.

Holocaust Museum Houston
http://www.hmh.org/default.htm

Teacher's Guide to the Holocaust (Florida Center for Instructional Technology, College of Education, University of South Florida)
http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu/Holocaust/default.htm

"Hope, Despair and Memory," Elie Wiesel's 1986 Nobel lecture
http://home.online.no/~kanda/wiesel2.htm

C.A.N.D.L.E.S. (Children of Auschwitz Nazi Deadly Lab Experiments Survivors)
http://www.candles-museum.com/

The Holocaust Memorial Center
http://www.holocaustcenter.org/

The Hopesite Homepage, part of the Nizkor Project site
http://veritas.nizkor.org/~hopesite/

The Ernest and Elisabeth Cassutto Memorial Pages
http://www.cyberlearning-world.com/memorial/dadmom.htm

Holocaust Teacher Resource Center
http://www.holocaust-trc.org/
The text for "Light from the Yellow Star" can also be found on this site at http://holocaust-trc.org/ylstr01.htm

Holocaust Commission Site
http://www.holocaustcommission.org/

Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the University of Minnesota
http://www.chgs.umn.edu

Literature of the Holocaust
http://dept.english.upenn.edu:80/~afilreis/Holocaust/holhome.htm

Women and the Holocaust
http://www.interlog.com/~mighty/

The History Place—Holocaust Timeline
http://www.historyplace.com/worldwar2/holocaust/timeline.html

Holocaust World Resource Center
http://www.hwrc.org/

Witness Legacy—Contemporary Art about the Holocaust
http://sunsite.utk.edu/witness/

Holocaust Survivor Oral Histories
http://holocaust.umd.umich.edu/

Rescuers From the Holocaust
http://www.humboldt.edu/~rescuers/

Holocaust History Project
http://www.holocaust-history.org/

Images of Reflection (pictures of the camps)
http://www.imagesforreflection.com/places.html

iEARN Holocaust Genocide Project
http://www.iearn.org/hgp/

The Holocaust Album: Historical and Contemporary Photographs
http://www.rongreene.com/holo.html

Anne Frank Remembered
http://www.spe.sony.com/classics/annefrank/

Anne Frank and the Holocaust
www.ncsa.uiuc.edu/edu/Affiliates/Elgin/A_FRANK/annehome.htm

A Hiding Place

I had been teaching seventh-grade math for several years when I was transferred to a language arts class beginning a study of Europe during World War II. I was deeply moved by The Devil's Arithmetic, Jane Yolen's novel about a young Jewish girl's experiences in a concentration camp, and went on to read several other books about the Holocaust.

Although our school has very few Jewish students, I knew I wanted to integrate lessons about the Holocaust and anti-Semitism into my math curriculum the next year but was not sure how. Then I discovered that one of the social studies teachers on my team, Maraline Karty, uses a storyline to address this topic.

In her unit on World War II, she has each student assume the identity of a townsperson in occupied Europe. One of their activities is to make a floor plan of a fictitious house and include a hiding place for a Jewish refugee. We realized I could meld my scale drawing unit with hers and provide a hands-on, interactive experience that could make the Holocaust more real for our seventh-graders.

In "The Hiding Place" project, Maraline introduces students to life during Hitler's rule and to the oppressiveness of totalitarianism by showing videos such as The Courage to Care (Anti-Defamation League, 800-343-5540) and The Wave (800-421-4246). For independent reading, the 7th graders choose from such books as Tapestry of Hope, by Alice Kern (Limited Edition Books); Number the Stars, by Lois Lowry (Houghton Mifflin); and Lisa's War, by Carol Matas (Scribner's Sons), in addition to the classic Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl (Doubleday).

In my math class, students measure two or three rooms of their own house, use ratio to draw them to scale, and incorporate a hiding place for a Jewish refugee. The area must be at least 25 square feet and have a concealed entry. In a brief paper attached to the floor plan, students describe the townsperson they are portraying, the individual they are harboring and the hiding place. Instead of being passive spectators of history, the youth become protectors as they shelter a victim of a repressive regime.

As culminating activities, we have the seventh-graders prepare an I-Search paper (a first-person research report) on the Holocaust or interview someone who lived during this time period. We also invite a Holocaust survivor to speak to the classes. This memorable project helps students develop empathy toward others, question unjust laws and personalize the study of history.

Victoria Lewis, Gregory Heights Middle School, Portland, Oregon

Reprinted with permission from Teaching Tolerance (Fall 1999).

TEACHER TALK

Alternatives for Students Who Are Not Allowed to Watch Schindler's List

My classes are about to finish reading Night, and I plan on showing Schindler's List. Those students who are not allowed to watch the film must go to the library for those two class days. I have one or two students from each class period. Does anyone have any ideas on something meaningful that these kids can be working on in the library while the rest of us watch the film? Thanks.

Angi Brush
AngiBrush@email.msn.com

Could they read I Never Saw Another Butterfly? Someone recently posted a wonderful butterfly mobile project. (See the next message for this project.) The students could work in pairs, design a butterfly, write or copy one of the poems from the anthology and place it on the butterfly.

Are you watching the entire movie? How long will that take? Tailor the poem and project to the length of time the students will be in the library. Or better still, can you get an art teacher involved on a short-term project? The other students may even envy [the ones who don't see the film.]

Katherine Mura

Here's the Butterfly Project (which was originally relayed to this list by another teacher).

1. Get yourself a copy of the book *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*—it's a book of poems and drawings by kids incarcerated at the Terezin Concentration Camp.
2. While you're at it, get a copy of the one-act play based on the book.
3. If you can, also get the video—I got it through the public library. It has readings of the poems set to music and is only about 30 minutes.
4. Assign one poem to each kid (or pair of kids). Their assignment is to make a paper butterfly—brightly colored—and on one wing, they write the name of the poem, the author, and their favorite lines; on the other wing, they write what the poem means, and what it means to them.
5. The kids take turns reading their assigned poem and their interpretation. The butterfly is then hung from the ceiling or from a mobile.

6. Allow the brightly colored butterflies to "fly" for a few days—perhaps through the unit, even. Before you finish the unit, hold a commemorative ceremony, in which you read aloud the names of each of the child poets who perished during the Holocaust (this information is available in an appendix in the book and should be consulted before assigning poems). As a poet perishes, the butterfly is cut down. Most likely, you will not have more than one butterfly still flying at the end of your study of the Holocaust—but then of the 15,000 kids who were deported from Terezin (Theresienstadt) to Auschwitz, 100 survived—none under the age of 14.

Also, several years ago I gave the following list of options for library work to students who could not watch *Schindler's List*.

Library Assignment

1. Research the life of Oscar Schindler and write a brief summary of his actions in saving Jewish people from extermination. In your writing, consider the question of whether or not he was a "hero." Fully explain your decision.
2. Research the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp and provide a description (written or visual) of the physical layout of the camp.
3. Throughout Europe, there were some non-Jews who risked their own safety to help Jews escape Hitler's plans for mass murder. Use library resources to find out about the groups of rescuers and people listed below and answer the following questions about each of them: How did they save Jews and what kind of courage did they need to do it? How did they make the moral choice to risk their own lives?
    a. The rescue of 7,200 Danish Jews by the people of Denmark.
    b. The actions of the Dutch people, including those who helped Anne Frank and her family.
    c. Raoul Wallenberg
4. Once it was known that Hitler was bent on genocide, there was armed resistance, especially in Poland. The best known example is the Warsaw ghetto. Define "genocide" and then research the "Warsaw Ghetto Uprising." Write a brief report on your findings.
5. Many Jewish people had the opportunity to leave Nazi Germany, but refused to do so. Some believed that the stories of the Nazi atrocities simply weren't true. Others refused to leave friends, family, and their homeland. If your doctor advised you to leave your family and your home next week in order to avoid a deadly plague, what would you do? Explain your decision.

In addition, there is a PG–13 video on *The Rescuers*—HBO did a whole series on them and these videos would be fine to watch in the library, enabling the class, as a whole, to do a follow-up activity, even if some students didn't watch *Schindler's List*. In fact, last year I used the HBO films for the whole class rather than going through the parent permission forms for *Schindler*. In my present high school, *Schindler* and *The Wave* are both shown in World History classes; in English, the kids see *The Devil's Arithmetic*, *One Survivor Remembers* or *Life is Beautiful*. *One Survivor Remembers* parallels the death march descriptions in *Night* perfectly and made quite a vivid impression on my kids.

Michelle Garbis
mirehol@netrox.net

Why not offer students alternative videos/movies that are G-rated? Our library has a corner with a small TV so that small groups of kids can watch videos. We have them watch *Summer of My German Soldier* (with Kristy McNichol) and several G-rated documentaries. One is called *Anne Frank Remembered*; it gives the background to the Anne Frank story. The other is a CBS video called *Hitler and Stalin: Legacy of Hate*.

Cynthia Holman
cynthia_holman@ycjusd.k12.ca.us

Another idea could be this: assign pairs to write biographies about different hypothetical characters—a hidden child, a survivor who emigrates to the U.S. or Canada, a survivor who emigrates to Israel, one who returns to Europe—and what their lives become, what their memories are, etc. Students can fictionalize representative Holocaust characters, and can do back up research either on the internet or in the library or both.

Anita Hoffman Ehrenfried
jbpotter@earthlink.net

Online Resources from *English Journal*

The following articles on teaching about the Holocaust, all of which originally appeared in NCTE's *English Journal*, are available as links from the *Classroom Notes Plus* page at http://www.ncte.org/notesplus/.

"Teaching the Holocaust: *Light from the Yellow Star* Leads the Way" by Nancy Gorrell (*English Journal*, Dec. 1997)

"Teaching Empathy through Ecphrastic Poetry: Entering a Curriculum of Peace" by Nancy Gorrell (*English Journal*, May 2000)

"Peace by Piece: The Freeing Power of Language and Literacy through the Arts" by Mary F. Wright and Sandra Kowalezyk (*English Journal*, May 2000)

"Embracing *All But My Life* by Gorda Weissmann Klein" by Harold M. Foster (*English Journal*, Dec. 1997)

Confronting Prejudice and Genocide: Using Symbols and Stories in Holocaust Education

Most students at the fourth-grade level or above are familiar with the haunting photographs and diary of Anne Frank, who Alvin Rosenfeld has described as "probably the best known child of the twentieth century" (Reconstruction 87). And yet, Holocaust survivor Primo Levi suggests in his Auschwitz memoir Moments of Reprieve (Penguin, 1985) that avoiding another Shoah still requires educating each generation about the consequences of prejudice and indifference. He also reminds us that the temptation to forget about or ignore the Holocaust's significance persists:

> We too are so dazzled by power and money as to forget our essential fragility, forget that all of us are in the ghetto, that the ghetto is fence in, that beyond the ghetto stand the lords of death, and not far away the train is awaiting. (172)

Levi's warning reinforces daily reports in the news about the alarming frequency of deaths from urban gang wars, the fiery conflagrations in Waco and Oklahoma City involving American militia groups, and continual campaigns of mass murder erupting across the globe.

In response, Rita Botwinick asks, "How can we foster such revulsion against policies of genocide so that no authority could implement them?" She then concludes, "In the arsenal to fight future destruction . . . education, slow tedious, and undramatic, remains the primary weapon" (A History of the Holocaust: From Ideology to Annihilation. Prentice, 1996). By encouraging students to discuss and write about the Holocaust as part of their multicultural education—starting in the primary grades—teachers will continually expose them to the "causes, instruments, and dangers" of discrimination and offer a powerful safeguard against hate crimes and genocide.

Study units in Holocaust education also encourage students at all grade levels to 1) reflect and write about their own behavior toward those perceived as "different" and 2) consider how and why ordinary people of all ages suffer when persecuted for their religion, race, or color.

One approach for teachers is provided by the Anne Frank Center USA and the Facing History and Ourselves program. (See box on Page 11.)

These organizations provide material stressing four central themes: 1) discrimination is cruel and irrational; 2) it is the ordinary citizen who discriminates; 3) discrimination is a matter of personal choice; and 4) the danger of stereotyping entire groups still exists.

Given their universal application, these topics offer students of all ages the chance to understand and fulfill a primary mission of Holocaust education—to promote in every individual a heightened sense of personal responsibility.

Admittedly, cultivating moral sensitivity in the classroom is not an easy or enviable task. Students absorb cultural prejudices at an early age, no matter where they live. A short poem by a student from northern California inserted in the Anne Frank in the World Exhibit Teacher's Guide (see box on page 24) illustrates how thoughtless and common stereotyping provokes resentment and racism:

Will They Ever Learn

As I look down, on this world of mine,
Several questions cross my mind.
Why do they stare when I walk through the Hall?
Why do they think I can run with a ball?
Why do they think I swear all the time?
Why do they think I'll resort to crime?
Why do they think I like to fight?
Is it because I'm dark, not light?
I hear them talk behind my back
About my skin because it's black,
Too black to be friendly, too black to be smart.
Don't they know it breaks my heart
To hear them tease without concern.
To wonder if they'll ever learn. (3)

Even a superficial examination of Holocaust history and literature echoes these themes exposing the irrational and cruel nature of discrimination. Eyewitness accounts written by adults and children disclose the painful and often public wounds inflicted by prejudice, as Blanca Rosenberg illustrates in her book To Tell At Last (University of Illinois Press, 1995) about conditions in her town in eastern Poland after the Nazi invasion: "The wall posters shrieked their message in three languages: German, Polish, and Ukrainian. DEATH TO THE JEWS AND BOLSHEVIKS!" (17). Rosenberg also witnesses incidents precipitated by the "new regulations, new deprivations" (19) which reveal how unrestrained bigotry leads to gratuitous violence:

> Anyone with glasses was marked for special attention. To the Ukrainians, glasses were the mark of membership in the Bolshevik intelligentsia. One night, a friend of ours came to my door, searching for a doctor. His face was covered with blood, and there were shards of glass protruding from where his glasses had been crushed against his face. (19)

The children who were exposed to this total collapse of moral behavior suffered most of all. Werner Galnik, a twelve-year-old German Jewish boy deported to the Riga Ghetto in Latvia, graphically describes in his journal how the SS enforced and abused the new Nazi laws:

> If anyone exchanged something at work or ran away from the ghetto, he was either hung or shot. One Jew was hung because he ran away from the concentra-

▶

> tion camp in the ghetto to his relatives. He hung for three days, and every Jew in the ghetto had to look at him.... In the evening when the Jews came from work, they had to march by the hanging man, and the commandant pointed to him and said, "This is what will happen to every Jew who tries to run away from us."
>
> ***—from Laurel Holliday's Children of the Holocaust and World War II (Simon, 1995).***

For students unaccustomed to confronting intolerance; these episodes clearly demonstrate how easily prejudicial conduct and laws lead to oppression and even death.

An equally difficult concept for students to comprehend is that ordinary people commit acts of racism. Flagrant abuses of power are so often attributed to groups—such as government leaders, the military, or religious fanatics—that individuals seem exempt from any responsibility for "the disintegration of civilized values" (Guidelines For Teaching About the Holocaust, 2. See box on page 24).

One likely source for this distortion reflects a troubling paradox. Such noted rescuers as Oskar Schindler, Miep Gies, and Raoul Wallenberg are admired for their remarkable acts of heroism which defied the Nazis' systematic extermination of European Jewry, and deservedly so. However, thousands of people also chose to remain silent or indifferent to the suffering of others (Guidelines 2). These same ordinary citizens, therefore, allowed prejudice, tyranny, even mass murder to overpower the nearly eleven million men, women, and children who relied on reason and conscience to protect them.

Texts providing valuable information on these issues for students at different grade levels include Shulamith Levy Oppenheim's book The Lily Cupboard: A Story of the Holocaust (primary readers); Barbara Rogasky's book Smoke and Ashes: The Story of the Holocaust (middle school); and Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior (high school).

Fiction and nonfiction narratives confirm that neighbors' friends, even family members betrayed one another. In his memorable collection of true stories The Last Jews in Berlin (Simon, 1982), Leonard Gross describes the difficulty perceived enemies of the state, especially Jewish fugitives, confronted in evading capture: ▶

TEACHER TALK

Staying Refreshed

This is my eighth year of teaching. I'm just wondering, how do others stay refreshed? Do some of you stay refreshed by moving to other schools? Teaching different grades? Changing content each year in each class? This discussion list is obviously refreshing, but what else?

Contributed to NCTE-talk

Find a National Writing Project site in your area and join it. It is the most refreshing experience I can think of. I love it so much that last year, when they couldn't pay me to be on staff, I volunteered to do it.

Art Belliveau
ogreart@aol.com

I read, join professional organizations, and take my sabbaticals when the time comes around. This time on sabbatical, I'm taking classes directly geared to sparking new ideas for presenting material—cooperative activities, reaching all modalities, etc. Last time it was strictly for me—lit study, personal writing courses. I'm always on the lookout for ideas to adapt to my situation. One former teacher aide used to say that she never saw me use the same material twice, which is a bit of a stretch, but I don't like monotony.

Sharon M. Lauderman
mrsmyth@prolog.net

I stay refreshed by:

1. never teaching summer school
2. trying new things in class as often as possible
3. going to students' extracurricular events to remind myself that they have lives outside of English and that I like them as people, not just as students
4. ignoring irritating coworkers (thank goodness there aren't many!)
5. insisting on timeouts for myself from *everything* at least once a day, usually for 2 to 3 hours right after school.
6. realizing that, as a teacher, I will always be thinking about my work, students, and making improvements, but that I chose this profession and would only be half the person I am without it.

Hang in there!

Stephanie Bearden
swbearden@yahoo.com

How do you stay refreshed? E-mail your ideas to notesplus@ncte.org, and we'll publish them in a future issue of Classroom Notes Plus.

> An even more sinister enemy for the Jewish fugitives than the loyal Germans were the turncoats in their midst, fellow Jews embarked on a tragic enterprise. "Catchers" they were called—men and women either without conviction even in normal times or morally normal persons frightened out of their wits by the threat of deportation. They worked directly for the Gestapo, operating out of a so-called Jewish Bureau of Investigation. . . . Their pay was their freedom; as long as they could find and present "illegal" Jews to the Gestapo for deportation, they could avoid deportation themselves.
>
> The catchers would walk through the city each day without their stars, on the lookout for underground Jews. If their prey was an old acquaintance, they would feign joy at seeing him or her and confide that they too were "illegals." If the prey was simply someone they suspected of being Jewish, they would confide their "secret" in the hope of eliciting a similar confession (74).

This type of entrapment, along with frequent threats of extortion and deportation, reached epidemic proportions in Berlin. By reading such anecdotes, students can appreciate the full impact of Nazi propaganda, which "played a key role in turning neighbor against neighbor in the Third Reich. It stereotyped the enemies of the community and identified these enemies with the economic, social and political difficulties confronting the nation . . . . The Nazi propaganda of hate, built on ancient racial theories and religious myths . . . documents the special interest the Nazi took in indoctrinating youth with their [Nazi] ideology in every aspect of their life—school, family, and extracurricular activities. Textbooks in all subjects, including mathematics, stressed the superiority of the Aryan/Nordic race (Guide 11).

Of course, this policy of discrimination quickly broadened to target homosexuals, political dissidents, Gypsies, Jehovah's Witnesses, Russian POWs, and the handicapped as undesirables. Several Holocaust books for children offer vivid stories specifically depicting the oppression younger people confronted, including Promise of a New Spring, by Gerda Klein Weissmann and Terrible Things: An Allegory of the Holocaust by Eve Bunting (for readers ages 6 and up); The Devil's Arithmetic by Jane Yolen, In the Mouth of the Wolf by Rose Zar, Clara 's Story by Clara Isaacman, A Daughter's Gift of Love by Trudi Birger, and Bridge to Freedom by Isobel Marvin (for readers 10 and up).

No rationale may fully absolve or explain this systematic abuse of power which led to imprisonment, torture, and death. However, this callous disregard for the suffering of others was frequently matched by indifference or denial. The behavior of those who did not intervene imparts an important message as well. Holocaust survivor Miles Lerman has "aptly remarked on the significant role bystanders played in allowing the Holocaust to occur. 'A perpetrator is not the most dangerous enemy,' Lerman argues. 'The most dangerous part is the bystander because neutrality always helps the killer'" (Guide 15).

The memoirs and eyewitness testimonies of Holocaust survivors also emphasize that discrimination is a matter of personal choice. Students exposed to documentary evidence of coercion and intimidation by the Nazi SS and Gestapo may assume that everyone who persecuted minorities and revoked their civil rights acted only out of fear or from an ingrained allegiance to authority.

Some students may have "the simplistic impression that the Holocaust was inevitable. Just because an historical event took place, and it was documented in textbooks and on film, does not mean that it had to happen. . . . The Holocaust took place because individuals, groups, and nations made decisions to act or not to act" (Guidelines 3). To dispel such misconceptions, Blanca Rosenberg describes the terrible irony of Jewish police in the ghetto transformed into tormentors indistinguishable from their Nazi captors:

> Members of the Jewish Auxiliary Police—the Judische Ordnungsdienst—seemed to take a special pleasure in their grisly duties; At first, responsible mem-

▶

Resources Cited in This Article

- An invaluable sourcebook cited in this article featuring Holocaust topics for teachers at various grade levels and in different disciplines is the pamphlet Guidelines for Teaching about the Holocaust, which is available from The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW, Washington, DC 20024.
- For more information about the Teacher Guide materials and the resource book Holocaust and Human Behavior from the Facing History and Ourselves Foundation, Inc., write to the foundation at 16 Hurd Road, Brookline MA 02146 or the Chicago office, 35 Wacker Drive, Suite 1300, Chicago, IL 60601.
- The Social Studies School Service catalog provides a comprehensive list of resource materials—books, lessons, videocassettes and laser discs, photo aids, activities, and posters—for elementary through high school classrooms. For more information, call (800) 421-4246, (310) 839-2249 or FAX (800) 944-5432. The mailing address is 10200 Jefferson Boulevard, Room J311, P. O. Box 802, Culver City, CA 90232-0802.

> bers of the Jewish community came forward to serve in the Judenrat and the Jewish police. They did their best to serve Jewish interests and to soften the force of German regulations. But when they realized that their work, especially with the Jewish police, amounted to collaboration, these men gave up their jobs, leaving no one but bullies and beasts, eager to outdo their masters in cruelty and abuse (34).

Eventually, Rosenberg despairs of trusting anyone after she sees a new poster:

> It was a warning to the Gentile population to be on the lookout for Jews on false identity papers. Those helping Jews were subject to execution. But now there was a one-hundred-zloty bounty on each Jew turned in to the authorities. . . . Now they'd be able to shake us down and then, when they'd picked us clean, turn us over to the "master race" at twice the old price. I was glad to be leaving Warsaw (99).

Through such revelations of personal treachery, bigotry, and greed, students can perceive that any crime against humanity begins with one individual choosing to hate another.

The fourth theme enables students to discuss incidents of racism and genocide which, unfortunately, reflect our continuing struggle against prejudice and intolerance. Although the Holocaust represents "a watershed event, not only in the twentieth century, but in the entire history of humanity" (Guidelines 1), attacks by the Ku Klux Klan, Neo-Nazis, and warring factions in Bosnia for the sake of "ethnic cleansing" echo the political and cultural antagonisms culminating in the Final Solution.

Even in their own lives, students may have observed or experienced an incident provoked by discrimination. In her book Seeking Diversity: Language Arts with Adolescents (Heinemann, 1992), Linda Rief describes several classroom activities related to the Holocaust which led to powerful writing (including poetry) and classroom discussions by her eighth-graders. Joan F. Kaywell also offers useful strategies for constructing group projects such as a diorama, memorabilia bags, collages, a dictionary of terms, or a classroom

▶

Tips

Holocaust Survivor Gerda Weissmann Klein Addresses Teachers

Read the full text at http://www.ncte.org/notesplus.

NCTE Convention participants packed a meeting room at the Chicago Hilton and Towers in November 1996 when author and lecturer Gerda Weissmann Klein shared both the pain of her experiences as a Polish Jew during World War II and her life philosophy that grew out of those experiences. The following excerpts from Klein's presentation are offered in hopes of capturing some of the beauty and impact of her talk.

When I look at you and stand in a place where I am free to say what is on my mind and in my heart without fear, where I have walked among books on so many wonderful subjects which take us into the realm of fantasy . . . when I am still cognizant and remember very clearly that the first time I saw my beloved father cry was when books were burned in Germany, I hope you will forgive me if I am a bit carried away with the thought of the privilege of being here. A privilege of sharing stories, stories which are the nourishment and the food when one is hungry. Stories which somehow help one not to see the horror and the pain around when one can escape into another world.

I felt somehow moved to tell you my very first encounter with reading. . . . I remember it was an early winter day, rather grey, and I was sitting near the window trying to read. And suddenly I realized that I could read, that the pages were speaking to me . . .[that] I did not have to rely on anyone else to tell me stories but that I could get stories from a book. It was an incredible discovery.

I had something akin to this many years later. One of the last books before the war which I read was Gone with the Wind, in Polish, and you'd be surprised what marvelous Polish Scarlet O'Hara spoke! Needless to say, I fell in love with that book. And then the war came—the world I knew and loved and was a part of was irrevocably destroyed on a beautiful, sunny autumn day, September 3, 1939.

I know that you have been teaching the Holocaust, for which I am more grateful than I can ever express. I know that it is almost impossible to grasp the horror and man's inhumanity to man. No matter what you heard, no matter how incredible, no matter how unbelievable, it all was true.

But there was another dimension that lived there, which gave one hope for the ultimate goodness of humanity, one that I believe has never been sufficiently illuminated. And that is the love, the friendship, the sharing, and the caring which existed in the camps . . . at a time when those qualities seemed to have vanished from the face of the earth.

museum based on Holocaust literature (*ADOLESCENT LITERATURE AS A COMPLEMENT TO THE CLASSICS*. Christopher-Gordon, 1993). By comparing their situations to the causes and consequences of stereotyping and prejudice leading to the Final Solution, students can "develop an awareness of the value of pluralism . . . and a tolerance of diversity. . . ." (*GUIDELINES* 2). In his commentary "Beyond Hate," Bill Moyers observes that:

> [By] looking at hatred honestly, by thinking and talking about it and sometimes just by acknowledging our own capacity for it, we open the possibility of a moral response, the first small gesture toward seeing another not as a stranger, not the enemy, but simply another human being. There is a world beyond hate. It leads not to utopia, but to civilization, one step at a time, one person to another (qtd. in *GUIDE* 19).

Perhaps the greatest value Holocaust studies can offer is to provide the impetus for such introspection. Statistics and factual evidence serve a useful purpose in quantifying losses, but they cannot measure the anguish parents and children felt while helplessly watching each other die. Nor can hatred be erased by dispensing platitudes.

The interdisciplinary nature of Holocaust studies enables students and teachers to examine the historical, social, political, religious, and economic conditions that culminated in the Holocaust (*GUIDELINES* 2). Such exposure raises questions of "fairness, justice, individual identity, peer pressure, conformity, indifference and obedience—issues which adolescents confront in their daily lives" (*GUIDELINES* 2).

However, the most profound transformation for many students happens as they read the personal testimonies of survivors and their children. Arnold Zable's odyssey to reconstruct his parents' lives in the Russian town of Bialystok transports him thousands of miles into the past (*JEWELS AND ASHES*, Harcourt, 1991). As he revisits the places where his ancestors died, he recalls all the stories woven around them:

> What was it they were trying to convey, our elders, when they told their stories? "Kadimah" means future; yet they talked endlessly of the past, sometimes lovingly, sometimes with great venom. Their stories were like the Siberian night sky as it appears now above the train, streaking starlight between spaces of darkness; and this is where their tales petered out, into an infinite darkness they called the Annihilation. They left a legacy of fragments, a jumble of jewels and ashes, and forests of severed family trees which their children now explore and try somehow to restore (23–24).

The melancholy beauty of this passage flickers with hope and the promise to rekindle a knowledge of the past nearly lost "between spaces of darkness"—an apt metaphor for the aspirations of Holocaust education.

This intense personal commitment infiltrating Holocaust art, poetry, stories, poems, and memoirs leaves a legacy for others to follow.

When students develop a similar sense of attachment, they also recognize the universal lessons the Holocaust teaches as it provides "credible models of heroism and dignity. At the same time, it compels them to confront the reality of the human capacity for evil" (*GUIDELINES* 13).

Numerous state commissions on Holocaust education (including Ohio, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania) have developed curricula and instructional objectives to fulfill this purpose. Through such exposure, students studying and writing about the Holocaust can become more informed citizens who "develop a deeper respect for human decency" (*GUIDELINES* 13), guided by reason and conscience to preserve the rights of others.

Nancy D. Kersell is a Lecturer in English at Northern Kentucky University and Director of the Northern Kentucky Writing Project.

This article was reprinted with permission from the KENTUCKY ENGLISH BULLETIN (Fall 1997).

Teaching for Change

The best source for progressive teaching resources.

The Teaching for Change catalog offers more than 150 books and audiovisual resources on multicultural, antiracist education. Includes titles for K-12 social studies, language arts, math science, school reform and staff development.

For a free catalog, contact:
NECA
PO Box 73038
Washington, DC 20056
800-763-9131
necadc@aol.com

Shop on-line at www.teachingforchange.org

Holocaust Study Opportunities

- The Center for Holocaust Studies at Brookdale Community College, Lincroft, New Jersey, is holding its third annual Summer Teacher Training Institute July 9–20, 2001. Holocaust education, prejudice-reduction curricula, Genocide studies, and hate and the Internet will be covered. For more information, contact Dale Daniels at 732-224-2074.
- A three-week Holocaust summer seminar in Israel will be held in July 2001. The trip, sponsored by the Jewish Labor Committee, the American Federation of Teachers, and the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, includes stops at various historic sites and prominent Holocaust institutions. For an application, contact Charlotte Wollheim at the Jewish Labor Committee, 212-477-0707.
- The Education Department of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is pleased to announce the seventh annual Arthur and Rochelle Belfer National Conference for Educators, to be held July 8–10, 2001. The conference is funded by a generous gift from the Belfer Foundation.

Middle and high school educators, with five or fewer years teaching the Holocaust, are invited to apply to attend this conference. Educators who complete the program receive a collection of educational resources and a voucher to purchase Holocaust-related resources in the Museum Shop.

Museum educators and scholars will share rationales, strategies, and approaches for presenting this complex topic to students in sessions designed specifically for middle and high school teachers. Participants will have extensive time to view the Museum's Permanent Exhibition, Remember the Children: Daniel's Story and other special exhibitions, visit the interactive computers in the Wexner Learning Center, and the Education Resource Center. Seminar sessions will emphasize planning and implementing units of study for teaching about the Holocaust in middle and high schools.

Applications will be available in mid-January. The application deadline is March 16, 2001. For information, contact Sylvia Kay, Conference Coordinator. Phone: 202-488-2639; fax: 202-488-2696; e-mail: skay@ushmm.org.

Create the Magic!

NCTE's
Spring Conference
"Create the Magic!"

NCTE

Birmingham, Alabama
March 29–31, 2001

Join NCTE in The Magic City at our annual Spring Conference. You will find inspiration to create moments of magic in the classroom.

Spring Conference's featured speakers include acclaimed authors:

• Ishmael Reed • Trudier Harris • Ashley Bryan

Meet with colleagues, authors, educators, and speakers; attend dynamic sessions; and immerse yourself in an interactive event that will rejuvenate and inspire you. You'll find the newest theories, practical ideas and strategies, and materials for classroom instruction and professional development.

Help "Create the Magic!" this March
at NCTE's Spring Conference.

For more information, visit our Web site at www.ncte.org or call our Customer Service Department at 800-369-6283, ext. 3849.

NOW Available from NCTE!

Teaching for a Tolerant World, Grades K–6:

Essays and Resources

Judith P. Robertson, editor, and the Committee on Teaching about Genocide and Intolerance

Teaching for a Tolerant World
GRADES K–6
Essays and Resources
Judith P. Robertson, Editor

When and how should children begin learning about genocide and intolerance? In this collection, editor Judith P. Robertson presents essays and resources that address this and other crucial questions. Beginning with guidelines on teaching about genocide and intolerance, the book features essays on varied topics, including explaining the concept of Nazism to young children. A wealth of resources is also provided—including books, articles, Web sites, and organizations—for teachers interested in learning and teaching about gay, lesbian, and bisexual people; elderly persons; African Americans; gender roles; First Nations peoples/Native Americans; and the Holocaust. *496 pp. 1999. Grades K–6. ISBN 0-8141-5183-3.*

No. 51833-3125 $35.95 ($27.95)

Order online at www.ncte.org.

To order, call NCTE toll-free at **877-369-6283**, or fax **217-328-9645.**

Teaching for a Tolerant World, Grades 9–12:

Essays and Resources

Carol Danks and Leatrice B. Rabinsky, editors, and the Committee on Teaching about Genocide and Intolerance

Teaching for a Tolerant World
GRADES 9–12
Essays and Resources
Carol Danks & Leatrice B. Rabinsky, Editors

Danks and Rabinsky present 16 inspirational and provocative essays by teachers who reflect on their classroom experiences. The book explores such diverse topics as novels produced during the Jim Crow era, the Salem witch trials, uses of multiethnic literature in conflict resolution, and peer dialogue journals. Invaluable lists of resources—including organizations, books, essays, films, CD-ROM programs, and Web sites—are also included. *397 pp. 1999. Grades 9–12. ISBN 0-8141-4296-6.*

No. 42966-3125 $32.95 ($23.95)

NCTE

Recommended Books for Teaching about the Holocaust

TRIUMPH OF HOPE: FROM THERESIENSTADT AND AUSCHWITZ TO ISRAEL by Ruth Elias.

Wiley, 1998. 274 pp. Published in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. ISBN 0-471-16365-1, $24.95.

Elias was a teenager when the Nazis invaded Czechoslovakia in 1939. She and her family went into hiding, but were betrayed to the Nazi police in 1941. Elias, her relatives, friends, and neighbors were sent to Theresienstadt, a ghetto through which thousands of Jews passed on their way to Auschwitz and other extermination camps.

Most Holocaust memories are written by male survivors; this is one of the few books that describe the experience from a woman's perspective. Elias wrote this book for her grandchildren, but it can be read by anyone who wants to learn about how the Jews of Europe faced, and in a few cases overcame, Nazi evil. (Reprinted from *MULTICULTURAL REVIEW*, March 2000)

VOICES: PLAYS FOR STUDYING THE HOLOCAUST by Janet E. Rubin.

Scarecrow Press [4720 Boston Way, Lanham, MD 20706; (301) 459-3366], 1999. 336 pp. ISBN 0-8108-3655-6, $35.00

Rubin offers eight plays or excerpts from plays geared to students, grades six and up, on various aspects of the Holocaust. Following an introduction to the Holocaust and the purpose of this volume, she divides the plays into three levels—beginning, intermediate, and advanced. For each play, the author offers an introduction to the playwright, the plot, and the major themes, along with historical background and suggestions for teaching activities. A bibliography lists other works by the featured playwrights, and other print and nonprint resources for understanding the Holocaust. (Reprinted from *MULTICULTURAL REVIEW*, December 1998)

THE HOLOCAUST IN LITERATURE FOR YOUTH by Edward T. Sullivan.

Scarecrow Press, 1999. 261 pp. ISBN 0-8108-3607-6, $29.50

This book, a very comprehensive annotated bibliography of Holocaust literature, is most welcome. Bibliographies of the Holocaust exist, of course, but they are geared to mature readers. This volume addresses the needs of educators and librarians for materials suitable for young people. The work covers fiction, nonfiction, and electronic resources for all age groups, including picture books for the very youngest. Sections on planning classroom presentations and booktalks are full of fresh, practical ideas. A section on making connections relates the Holocaust to such other abominations as slavery, apartheid, and ethnic cleansing. (Reprinted from *MULTICULTURAL REVIEW*, March 2000)

***MULTICULTURAL REVIEW* is published quarterly by GP Subscription Publications. The individual subscription rate is $29.95. Visit the Web site at http://mcreview.com.**

Helping Students Reach Beyond Their Immediate Worlds

This is an excerpt from "Teaching the Holocaust in the English Classroom: Hearing the Voices, Touching the History," by Grace M. Caporino. That article appears in Section II, Teaching about Issues of Genocide, in TEACHING FOR A TOLERANT WORLD, GRADES 9–12, *edited by Carol Danks and Leatrice B. Rabinsky (NCTE, 1999).*

In searching for a way to help students reach beyond their own immediate worlds and relate to Holocaust readings, I have delineated five thematic categories which can frame readings and can help them understand the interactions of the different categories.

I outline these categories as victim, perpetrator, bystander, collaborator, and rescuer. I write student responses on the board as their generic definitions for categories help them recognize how the roles relate to the genre of Holocaust literature.

Different works lend themselves to exploration of the categories, and an example of this is the poem "Riddle" by William Heyen, where the roles of perpetrators, collaborators, and bystanders are investigated. In Heyen's poem a speaker sketches a scenario of deportation and extermination, and in simple diction the poem examines the culpability of the ordinary masses who faciliated the Holocaust machinery. The speaker's repeated question "Who killed the Jews?" is a refrain which gives way to repeated denials from perpetrators, collaborators, and bystanders (such as a typist, an engineer)—all of whom evade any personal responsibility for their role in genocide.

Reading the poem is a way for students to psychologically penetrate the Holocaust universe. Absorbing the experience of the poetic persona gives the students a window into historical events and puts them in touch with this history. ▶

A particularly effective way of presenting the poem is to have individual students read the specific denials, i.e., by the typist, engineer, etc., so that the varied classroom voices represent individual denials of culpability.

A follow-up exercise to this poem is to divide the class into small groups and have them research the roles of different historical figures in the poem. Then they can write a response to the denials of the individual perpetrators, collaborators, and bystanders, e.g., Eichmann and Speer. The exercise can be followed by writing a question on the board: "How does this history relate to the individual in society, and what does it have to do with me?" The question telescopes the enormity of the numbers of perpetrators, bystanders, and collaborators by examining individual acts which made genocide possible. It also places the student at the center of history by vicariously evoking the individual moral choices which must be made in all societies.

Reflection on the categories and moral choices implicit in the poem's delineation helps students recognize their responsibilities as individuals.—Teaching for a Tolerant World, Grades 9–12. (NCTE, 1999)

NOTES

African American Read-In Scheduled for February, Black History Month

On Sunday and Monday, February 4 and 5, NCTE will join the NCTE Black Caucus in sponsoring the twelfth national African American Read-In Chain.

This year's goal is to have at least one million Americans across the nation reading works by African American writers on February 4 at the designated hour of 4:00 p.m., EST; 3:00, CST; 2:00, MST; and 1:00, PST. Monday, February 5, is the date designated for read-ins in schools.

The event is an opportunity for schools, libraries, community organizations, businesses, and interested citizens to make literacy a significant part of Black History Month by hosting and coordinating read-ins.

These activities may range from bringing together family and friends to share a book to staging public readings and media presentations featuring African American writers.

For further information, contact Jerrie C. Scott, National Coordinator, African American Read-In Chain, University of Memphis, 132-B Ball Hall, Memphis, TN 38152; or Sandra E. Gibbs, NCTE Coordinator, NCTE Director of Special Programs, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096. Send e-mail requests to lwalters@ncte.org.

NCTE Assembly for the Teaching of English Grammar Web Site

Brock Haussamen, the new president for the NCTE Assembly for the Teaching of English Grammar (ATEG), invites you to visit ATEG's recently reorganized Web site. ATEG's Web site offers many different resources for teaching grammar, and you can join ATEG's listserv discussion by sending an e-mail to ATEG@listserv.muohio.edu, with the message "Subscribe ATEG" followed by your name.

"Could You Fax Me the Classroom Idea That Uses Play-Dough?"

> *"For years I have looked for an effective hands-on activity which would introduce my students to the entire writing process in a single class period. However, I wanted an activity outside of writing itself. I needed a "bucket" which would hold all the concepts I teach within the writing process: critic/creator, audience, purpose, rehearsal, revision, editing, publishing. Finally, I came up with the metaphor of sculpting. . . ."*

The teaching idea "A Metaphorical Introduction to the Writing Process," by Rosemary Faucette, does indeed make creative use of play-dough, but because it was published in Ideas Plus Book 15 back in 1997, we were surprised to receive a flurry of calls about it in recent months.

A half dozen teachers who had lost or lent out their copies of the strategy decided they wanted to use it this fall, and called us in hopes that the word "play-dough" was enough to enable us to find it and send it to them.

It was, and we did. Now, in case other readers would like easy access to this popular idea, we've posted it on the Classroom Notes Plus Web page under the Classroom Ideas link. Thank you, Rosemary, for sharing such a useful strategy!

Censorship Problem?

NCTE offers advice, helpful documents, and other support at no cost to K–12 teachers, schools, and districts that are faced with challenges to literary works, films and videos, or teaching methods. Leave a message at 800-369-6283, ext. 3848, or call Charles Suhor, NCTE/SLATE Field Representative, directly at 334-280-4758.

▶

I Love Teaching!

My advanced sophomores are reading *FAHRENHEIT 451*. Today we were discussing some of the background to the book. We talked about how Guy Montag may have been named for Guy Fawkes and how the Britains celebrate Guy Fawkes Day by burning effigies of Fawkes.

Then, when we began to talk about the Phoenix symbols on the firemen's uniforms, one girl said, "Wow! Cool!" I asked her what was cool and she said, "In the Harry Potter mysteries, Dumbledore has the Phoenix and its name is Fawkes! Way Cool!"

I love teaching!

Sherry B. Godsey
sgodsey@usit.net

English Literature Summer Schools

English Literature Summer Schools are two-week courses in Yorkshire, featuring seminars on works by the Brontes, Jane Austen, Wordsworth, Coleridge, D. H. Lawrence, Ted Hughes, and Shakespeare. Organized for small numbers of students of mixed ages, backgrounds, and nationalities, the Summer School sessions include family accomodations, trips around the nearby countryside, visits to authors' homes, lectures by the faculty of the English Department at Sheffield University, a play at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford, and a backstage tour. Participants from the U.S. can usually earn credit for this course from their own institutions.

The 2001 session will be held July 7–21. The total cost, including accomodations, food, tuition, all visits, and theatre tickets, is $1,380. Applications and an initial deposit of $150 should be submitted by the end of March 2001. A list of recommended reading and other details will be sent to registered students. Applications may be requested from Avril and Arthur Meakin, English Literature Summer Schools, Apricot Villa, 10 Victoria Road, Sheffield, England S10 2DL. Telephone: (0114) 266-0766; fax: (0114) 268-7921; e-mail: AvrilMeakin@netscape.net; Web site: www.webmarketing.co.uk/ess/.

Humanities Abroad

Each summer Humanities Abroad offers three-week summer programs in literature, history, and the arts. The sites for the 2001 program include Cambridge, Dublin, and Florence. For more information, visit the Web site at http://www.humanitiesabroad.com, call 1-800-754-9991, or write to Humanities Abroad, 11 Gloucester St., 31, Boston, MA 02115.

INVIGORATE YOUR TEACHING

Use an NCTE Plus Membership to put a fresh spark into your teaching. Every Plus Membership includes:

- Voting membership in the NCTE Secondary Section.
- A subscription to the NCTE newspaper, *THE COUNCIL CHRONICLE*.
- A subscription to *CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS*, a quarterly publication of practical teaching ideas contributed by teachers across the country. Each issue is packed with dozens of immediately usable ideas (published January, April, August, and October).
- *IDEAS PLUS*, an annual book of classroom ideas and exercises covering the teaching of composition, literature, and language. *IDEAS PLUS* provides a ready reserve of teaching ideas—ones you can use with existing lessons. In addition, it will help in creating new units and reviving old ones.

Become an NCTE Plus member for only $45 per year. Or, if you are already an NCTE member, add Plus to your membership for only $15 per year. (NCTE Plus will run concurrently with your existing membership.)

☐ **YES**, I'd like to join NCTE and become an NCTE Plus member today. $45.00

☐ **YES**, I am already an NCTE member, and I would like to add NCTE Plus to my existing membership. $15.00

Your current membership number: ____________

Name ____________

Address ____________

City ____________ State ______ Zip ______

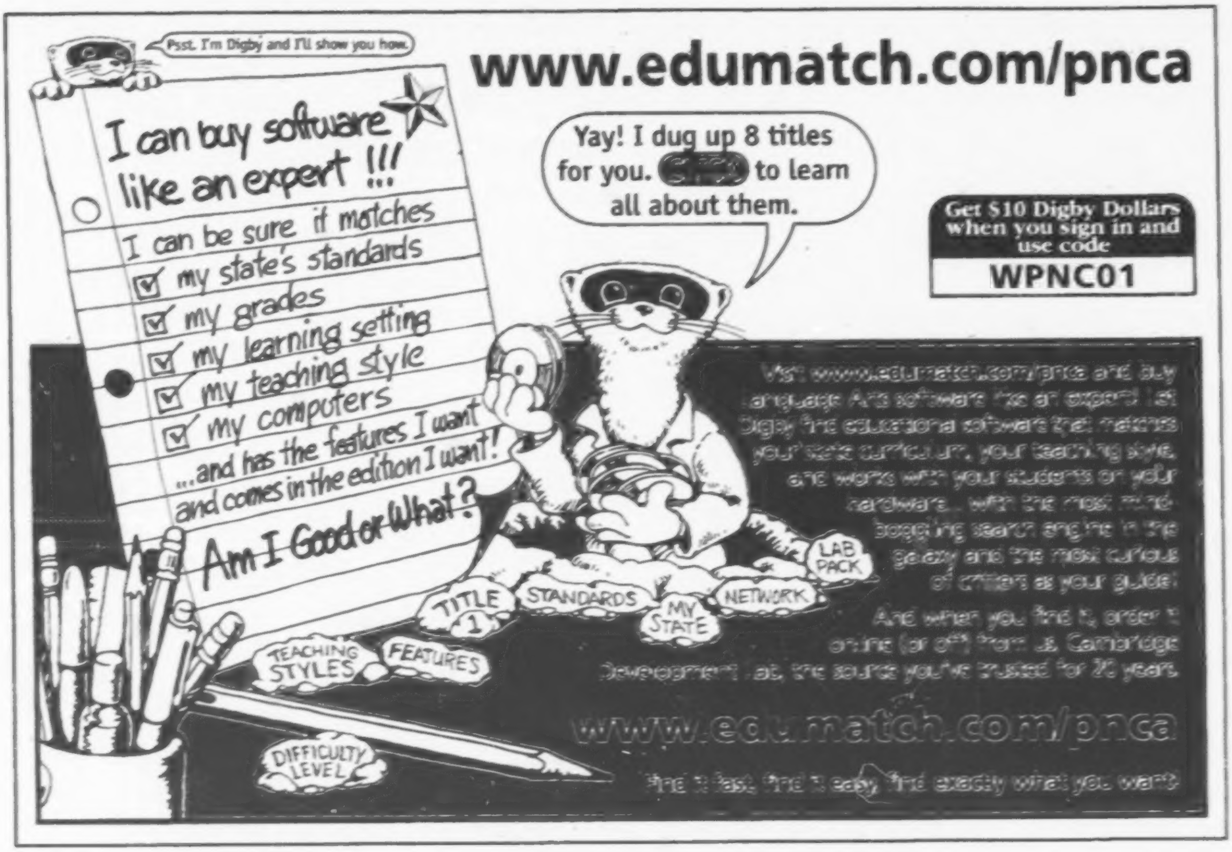
Phone: Home ____________ Office ____________

☐ Remittance enclosed.
(Make your check payable to NCTE.)

☐ Charge my VISA or MasterCard.
Account Number ____/____/____/____
Exp. Date ____/____

☐ Bill me. ____________
(Your signature) P-3125

YOU MAY ALSO CALL 1-877-369-6283
OR GO ONLINE AT
WWW.NCTE.ORG/MEM/
ENROLL.FORM.HTML



Psst. I'm Digby and I'll show you how.
www.edumatch.com/pnca
I can buy software like an expert !!!
I can be sure it matches
☑ my state's standards
☑ my grades
☑ my learning setting
☑ my teaching style
☑ my computers
...and has the features I want
and comes in the edition I want!
Am I Good or What?
Yay! I dug up 8 titles for you. Click to learn all about them.
Get $10 Digby Dollars when you sign in and use code
WPNC01
LAB PACK
TITLE 1
STANDARDS
MY STATE
NETWORK
TEACHING STYLES
FEATURES
DIFFICULTY LEVEL
www.edumatch.com/pnca
Find it fast, find it easy, find exactly what you want!

Visit www.edumatch.com/pnca and buy Language Arts software like an expert! Let Digby find educational software that matches your state curriculum, your teaching style, and works with your students on your hardware... with the most mind-boggling search engine in the galaxy and the most curious of critters as your guide!

And when you find it, order it online (or off) from us, Cambridge Development Lab, the source you've trusted for 20 years.

MARTHA'S VINEYARD SUMMER INSTITUTE
IN WRITING, READING, AND TEACHING

Graduate Courses in English/Language Arts, K - 13

Two Sessions in 2001
June 29 - July 12
July 14 - July 27

National Guest Faculty
M.A. Degree Program Available

Northeastern
UNIVERSITY

On the Web:
http://www.vineyardworkshops.neu.edu

e-mail: ccenter@lynx.neu.edu
phone: 617-373-3637
fax: 617-373-2509

Contact:
Carole Center
406 Holmes Hall
Northeastern University
Boston, MA 02115

Educating Leaders in the Profession for over 20 Years

Literature in Context Online

Literature in Context Online

Ten volumes of the critically acclaimed, curriculum-based *Literature in Context* series—a rich collection of primary source material, collateral readings, and commentary that illuminates the historical, social, and cultural context of ten major literary works—**are now on the Web.**

Each sourcebook takes full advantage of the Internet's possibilities, adding many new, exciting features:

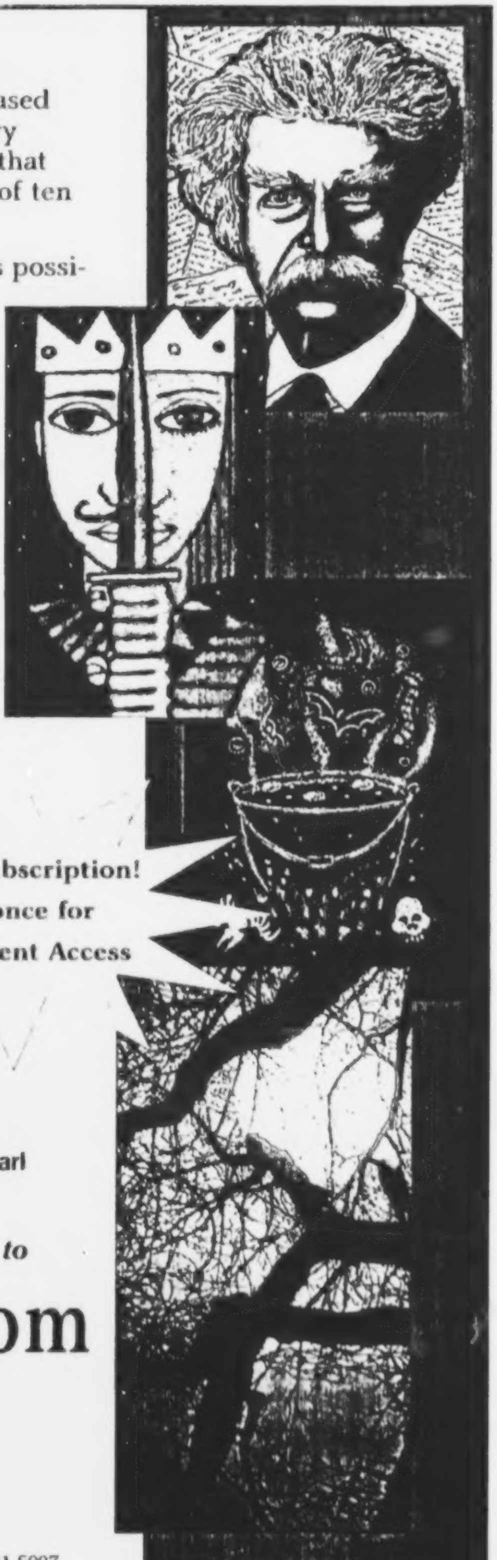
- **Multimedia resources that deepen the student's ability to understand the dynamics of the literature**
- **Study questions and teacher resource materials that facilitate discussion, reflection, and debate**
- **Extensive web links to related sites that promote active and independent student research**
- **Contextual timelines and glossary of cultural references and historical idioms from each great work**

Price for individuals is $49.95 per online sourcebook

Institutional Price begins at $105 per sourcebook

SPECIAL OFFER: price for all ten sourcebooks begins at $800

Understanding. . .Macbeth
. . .Things Fall Apart
. . .The Crucible
. . .Hamlet
. . .The Scarlet Letter
. . .To Kill a Mockingbird
. . .Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
. . .Their Eyes Were Watching God
. . .Pride and Prejudice
. . .Of Mice and Men, The Red Pony, and The Pearl



Not a Subscription!
Pay once for
Permanent Access

For more information or for a FREE demo, log on to

www.litincontext.com

Contact our Director of Sales for ordering information:
phone 1-203-226-3571 ext. 3383, or email gem@greenwood.com

GEM
GREENWOOD
ELECTRONIC
MEDIA

GREENWOOD ELECTRONIC MEDIA
88 Post Road West • P.O. Box 5007 • Westport, CT 06881-5007
Telephone (203) 226-3571 • Office FAX (203) 226-4712

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

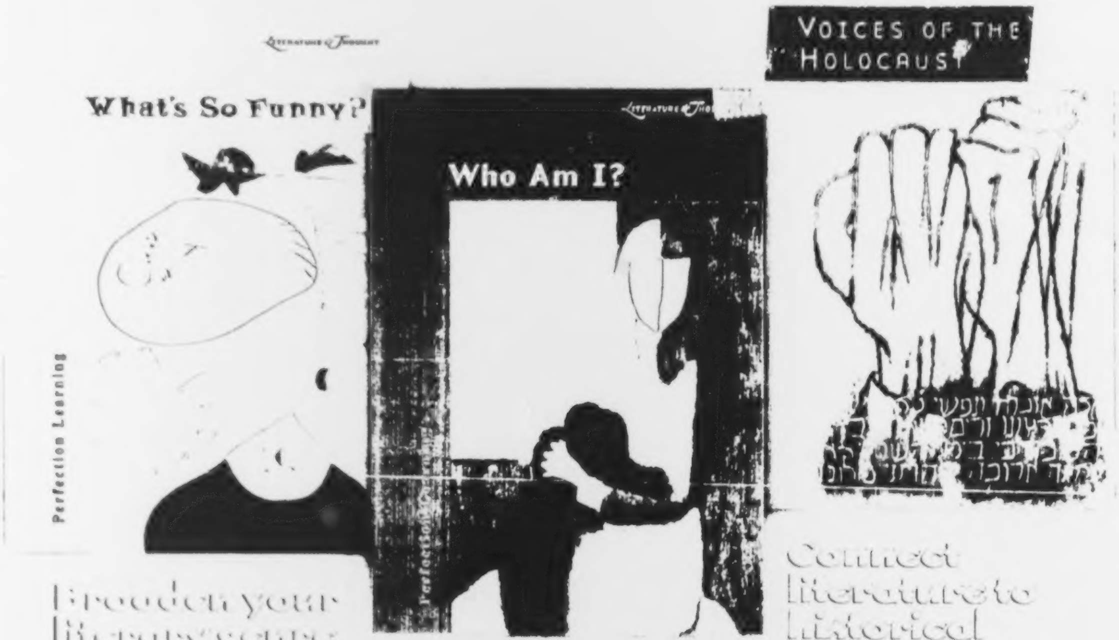
A groundbreaking literature program that teaches critical thinking

NEW! LITERATURE & THOUGHT

Middle School/High School

Develop students' critical thinking skills with thought-provoking fiction, nonfiction, and poetry selections by distinguished authors and historical figures! Each of the anthologies challenges the reader, promotes critical thinking, and encourages independent exploration of genres, themes, and issues.

"This (Voices of the Holocaust) is awesome! I have read it once and am reading it again!" Secondary Teacher, Pennsylvania


Literature & Thought
What's So Funny?
Perfection Learning
Literature & Thought
Who Am I?
Perfection Learning
VOICES OF THE HOLOCAUST

Broaden your literary genre studies

- Ecology
- Fantasy
- Humor
- Mystery
- Mythology
- Science Fiction
- Sports

Enhance your thematic units

- Decisions
- Family
- Friendship
- Heroes
- Identity
- Justice
- Survival

Connect literature to historical events and eras

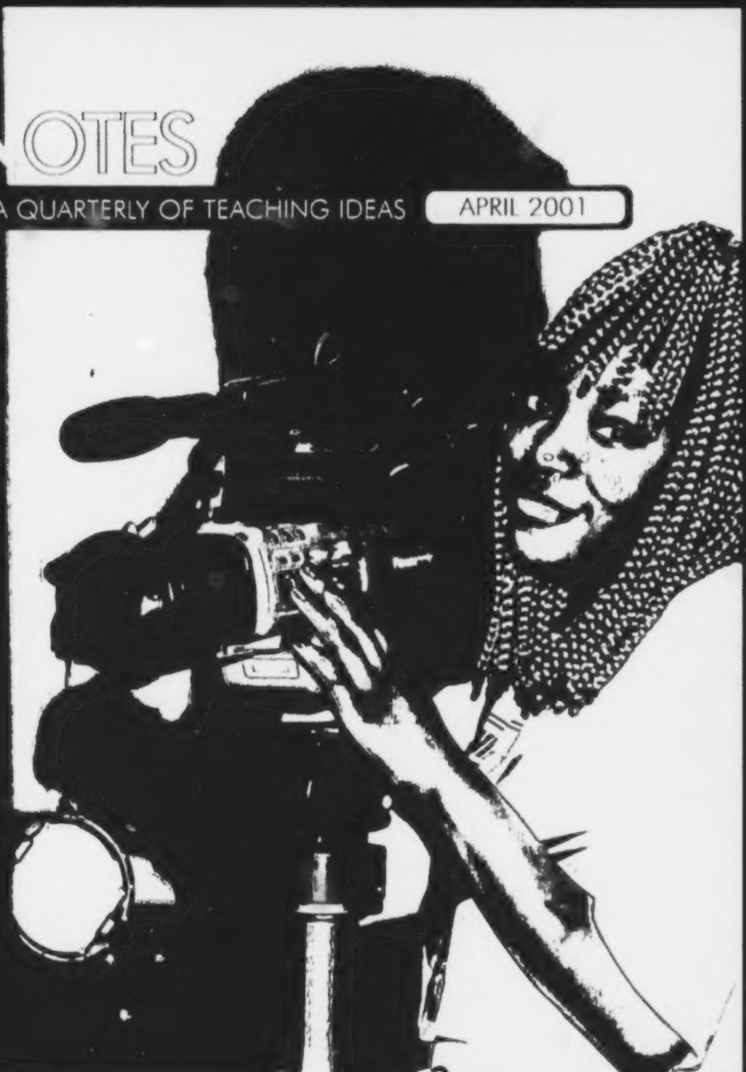
- Civil Rights
- The Civil War
- The Great Depression
- The Holocaust
- Immigration
- Vietnam and the 60s
- Western Expansion

Perfection Learning®
CORPORATION

1000 North Second Avenue • P.O. Box 500 • Logan, IA 51546-0500 • Phone: 1-800-831-4190
Fax: 1-712-644-2392 • E-mail: orders@perfectionlearning.com • Web site: www.perfectionlearning.com

CLASSROOM NOTES *Plus*

A QUARTERLY OF TEACHING IDEAS
APRIL 2001



In This Issue

Focus on Media Literacy

Finding Stories in Paintings

Dead Poet Interviews

Ten TV Analysis Projects

From the National Council of
Teachers of English

CLASSROOM NOTES *Plus*

Project Coordinator
Felice A. Kaufmann

Editorial Assistant
Emily Nafziger

Design
Joellen Bryant

Consultant
NCTE Associate Executive Director
Dale Allender

Copyright © 2001 by the National Council of Teachers of English. Volume 18, Number 4 (April 2001)

It is the policy of NCTE in its journals and other publications to provide a forum for the open discussion of ideas concerning the content and the teaching of English and the language arts. Publicity accorded to any particular point of view does not imply endorsement by the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, or the membership at large, except in announcements of policy, where such endorsement is clearly specified.

CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS (ISSN 1526-5641) is published four times a year, in January, April, August, and October, by the National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096, as an exclusive benefit of CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS membership. Annual membership dues are $45.00; $15.00 of this amount is for CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS. Inquiries about NCTE Plus membership or communications regarding change of address and permission to reprint should be addressed to CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096. Periodical postage paid at Urbana, Illinois, and at additional mailing offices.

Cover photo: © Dwight R. Cendrowski/Mira.

Call for Submissions

CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS invites your descriptions of original, unpublished teaching practices for consideration. In the case of an adapted idea, we ask that you clearly identify any sources that deserve mention.

To make your description as useful as possible to CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS readers, we suggest that you consider questions like these as you prepare your submission: What are the goals of the activity or classroom practice? What makes it especially meaningful for you and your students? How do you introduce this idea to students? In what ways do their interests and ideas help direct the course of this activity? What natural progression does this activity usually follow? How are students encouraged to reflect on their learning? How do you judge this practice to be effective? How would you change your implementation of it in the future?

Please submit double-spaced, typed copy. Receipt of your submission will be acknowledged by postcard, but acknowledgment does not guarantee publication. We are unable to return manuscripts, so please keep a copy. We reserve the right to edit submissions for clarity and length.

All CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS submissions will be considered for the print version of CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS, for inclusion on the CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS Web page (www.ncte.org/notesplus), or for use in the annual edition of IDEAS PLUS.

Send submissions to CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096 or send e-mail to notesplus@ncte.org. For more information, call or e-mail Felice Kaufmann at NCTE Headquarters: 1-800-369-6283, ext. 3648; fkaufmann@ncte.org.

Many of the e-mail contributions in this issue are reprinted from NCTE-talk, an electronic discussion group sponsored by NCTE. To read interesting discussions on a variety of topics related to secondary teaching, visit the NCTE-talk archives at http://www.ncte.org/lists/ncte-talk/archives.html or click on Site Map from the NCTE home page (www.ncte.org) and choose NCTE-talk Archives.

The future belongs
to those who
believe
in the beauty
of their dreams.

—Eleanor Roosevelt

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Ideas from the Classroom

Finding Stories in Paintings—Doris Brewton 2
Language as Visual Aid: Using the Classroom Walls Differently—Chad A. Donohue 3
Connecting Songs and Stories—Terri Fisher-Reed 4
Imitating the British Romantic Poets—Michael T. Duni 5
Paste-Pot Poetry—Mary Ann Yedinak 6
Dead Poet Interviews—Colette Marie Bennett 6

Focus on Multicultural Education

A Moral Choice 8

Focus on Media Literacy

What is Media Literacy?—Andrew Garrison 12
Turning the Camera on the Class—Alice Cross 13
The Center for Media Literacy 15
Barry's Bulletin—A Resource for Media Educators 17
Web Sites on Media Literacy and Advertising 18
Online Resources on Media Literacy 21

Teacher Talks

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" 7
How Do You Stay Refreshed? 10
Webfolios 11
Teaching Film and Media 19

Traci's Lists of Ten

Ten Television Analysis Writing Projects—Traci Gardner 16

Web Resources

April is Poetry Month 4
Student Web Publishing Resources 9
Using the Web for High School Student Writers 12

Previews

After Viewing: Reflections on Responding to Films in the Classroom—Bill Martin 20
Viewing the Films: Not "Whether or Not," but "How?"—William McCauley 20

Classroom Solutions

A Grading Tip 21
Notes 21
CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS Index, 2000–2001 22

IDEAS FROM THE CLASSROOM

This issue of CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS includes ideas and inspiration for classroom explorations of poetry, popular songs, descriptive language, and web-based portfolios.

Also included is "A Moral Choice," an article that addresses the role of white teachers in multicultural education and suggests that teachers of all ethnicities need to become active community-building agents for social change.

A themed section on Media Literacy attempts to answer the question "What Is Media Literacy?" and includes articles on teaching media and film, a list of recommended Web sites, a collection of writing projects for analyzing television shows, and more.

This issue also includes the spring index for the 2000–2001 publication year of CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS.

Finding Stories in Paintings

My mother, an avid *READER'S DIGEST* reader, noticed that a favorite print of mine, Andrew Wyeth's *CHRISTINA'S WORLD*, was featured in an article in the January 1997 issue (p. 162). Interested, she read the story and discovered that it was about the creation of Wyeth's CHRISTINA'S WORLD. I had no idea that there was a published account of the creation of the painting—it was an English teacher's dream come true. My mother sent me the magazine, and I conducted the following experimental activity with my class. It turned out to be a very successful way to encourage creative thinking and detailed writing.

I placed the print at the front of my room for two days and managed to avoid answering any questions. I created a list of personal interview/inventory questions and, armed with the print, story, and inventory, I was ready to play psychologist to a fictional character.

I talked to students about how we all have stories and about how good authors use those stories to help them create characters. We discussed the ways authors can develop and reveal characters as Christina patiently waited. Then I told students that they were going to create the story of the woman in the painting. To get us warmed up, I began my battery of questions (see the list below).

Questions to Aid in Character Development

1. Who am I? Who am I named after? Do I like my name?
2. What is the date? Consider season and year.
3. How old am I? What do I think about my age?
4. What do I look like? Consider facial characteristics, body type, etc.
5. How do I move? Slowly? Quickly? Gracefully?
6. How do I speak? Softly? Forcefully? Shyly?
7. Do I have any friends? Who? What do I think of them?
8. Do I have any mannerisms? What do they show about my character?
9. Do I have any disability or chronic illness? If so, how do I deal with it?
10. How energetic am I? Am I satisfied with my energy level?
11. What is my favorite memory?
12. What was my childhood like?
13. What are my dreams and hopes for the future?
14. What do those closest to me think of me?
15. Do I know the person painting me?
16. What is my relationship with the painter?
17. Do I want to be painted? Why or why not?
18. Where are we?
19. How long have I been here?
20. What am I thinking while I am being painted?

Students were to describe physical aspects first, then we eased into her memories, her life and her psychological make-up. They named her, studied her, and created her. They were hooked before they knew it. With their handy list of answered questions, students began writing short stories in which they developed the character of the unknown woman.

Finally, after much writing and editing and discussion, students were ready to read their stories to the class. I sat quietly by and enjoyed their labor. I always write with my students, so when they had all shared, they turned to me. I explained that I had a different assignment this time because I knew something that they did not. I then read the article from *READER'S DIGEST*, divulging the real identity of the woman and explaining how the painting came to be.

I told them the painting was titled CHRISTINA'S WORLD and that the girl in the grass was 55-year-old Christina Olson. Unknown childhood medical problems left her without the use of her lower body, and she used her arms to pull herself around. The house in the picture is the only home Christina ever knew, and an upstairs bedroom served as Andrew Wyeth's studio for around 30 years. (For more information, visit http://entertainment.mainetoday.com/art/Christina.shtml.)

Even though students' stories differed from the truth, I explained that they were not wrong because they had created an alternate woman with another life. The point was

▶

that they had given her life. Somehow that flat surface became alive and as multidimensional as our world. The magic worlds of visual and written art met in my room, and they enjoyed each other's company. My students look for stories in visual art now—just as they look for visual images in writing.

Doris Brewton, Pike County High School, Elberta, Alabama

Language as Visual Aid: Using the Classroom Walls Differently

A couple of years ago, I sat amid my seventh-grade composition students, watching them quietly write. A boy we'll call Nick approached my desk and asked if he could borrow a thesaurus.

"Sure thing," I responded, adding "Whatcha looking up?"

"Oh, I just need some words," he said, returning to his seat.

No doubt Nick's simple reply moved me in the direction of developing a system for teaching writing where "some words" were always available and accessible to students during the writing act.

I began to see my classroom as a kind of open thesaurus, a toolbox for writers. I imagined the walls of the classroom arranged into stations housing large-print lists of descriptive synonyms and stylish sentence starters, as well as tips and ideas for helping students address particular writing purposes. The key would be creating an atmosphere where students were able to access all—or most—of the resources without leaving their seats. "Look it up" would soon become, "Look up."

I began formation of what I call the "Writing on the Walls" system for teaching composition by creating a station called Adjective Alley. This station of the room houses highly visible adjective clusters arranged in groups of four. Clusters are composed of descriptive words for use in student writing. Words are written in varying color patterns to avoid blending and confusion. The use of synonym clusters helps expand student vocabulary by giving them several examples of how to portray a specific idea.

Below are four examples of clusters which appear on our classroom walls.

icy	unique	giant	vague
frigid	different	towering	unclear
brisk	strange	enormous	shadowy
cold	rare	large	dim

With the clusters in place, students have direct access to descriptive tools for use in their writing.

I might, for example, simply ask students to write an opening scene to a story about two friends exploring in the ▶

Visit http://www.ncte.org/notesplus for these new resources!

- Two new "Teacher Talk" features: "Teaching Science Fiction Prose" and "Teaching Science Fiction Poetry," plus a list of science fiction poetry Web links
- "Rockin' Oldies Shake Up Millenium Poetry Unit"—A lesson plan from the VIRGINIA ENGLISH BULLETIN
- "Science and the English Teacher"—An article from the OHIO JOURNAL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
- "Media Study: Non-transparent Constructions"—This excerpt from RETHINKING HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH (NCTE, 1997) addresses Lee Masterman's first principle of media study, "non-transparency," and suggests ways to introduce students to the idea that media construct or represent reality, rather than simply transmit or reflect it.

Visit the Feedback Page on the CNP Web Site

In order to make CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS as helpful a resource as possible to middle school and high school English teachers, we'd like to ask for feedback from you, our readers.

Visit the CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS Web site at **http://www.ncte.org/notesplus** and click on Feedback Form at the bottom of the page. You may print out the form and either mail or e-mail your responses to Felice Kaufmann, CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana IL 61801-1096; e-mail: fkaufmann@ncte.org. Thank you for your input!

woods. I then ask them to begin the first sentence of their scene with a descriptive adjective, adding that they may choose any of the adjectives from the Adjective Alley section of the classroom or come up with their own, if they prefer.

Having done this particular activity—and others like it—many times with my students, I have come across some eye-catching opening story lines. A few samples taken from my students' work are shown below.

> Brisk winds reminded us that we needed a fire, and fast.
>
> Strange shadows crossed the wooded path.
>
> Giant trees make traveling at night almost impossible.
>
> Vague images of home made us even more determined to find our way back to camp before dark.

By requiring students to begin their sentences with adjectives, we broaden their use of sentence styles and require them to use their creative powers. The same process can be used with other types of words and phrases as well.

Much more could be said regarding the walls and teaching kids to write; however, let me close with a challenge to writing teachers everywhere to begin viewing the walls of their classrooms differently—make language itself a visual aid in your classroom!

Chad A. Donohue, Monroe Middle School, Monroe, Washington.

April is Poetry Month

In 1996, April was established as National Poetry Month by the Academy of American Poets.

The purpose of the month is to bring people around the country together to celebrate poetry and its vital place in American culture.

Thousands of schools, businesses, and non-profit organizations will participate through readings, book displays, workshops, and other events. For additional information and resources, visit http://www.poets.org.

Connecting Songs and Stories

When in my car, listening to the radio, I frequently find myself hearing songs that remind me of a book I've read. For example, Sarah McLachlan's "Adia" reminds me of The Scarlet Letter and other Puritan literature, because her belief stated in the song is that we are born innocent. McLachlan's belief is completely opposite of the Puritan belief that we are born filled with sin and corruption.

Making connections between a novel and a song is a good way to focus students' attention on important literary elements like theme, plot, characterization, setting, language, literary devices, and tone. Toward this end, I use an activity in which I ask students to write comparisions between a song and a work of literature.

This activity can be done in two ways. In the first, the teacher selects a song (and poems, to add variety or if appropriate songs are difficult to find) to accompany a particular work. For example, the teacher could play the song "Mask" by the Fugees, and read the poem "We Wear the Mask" by Paul Lawrence Dunbar and the short story "Who's Passing for Whom" by Langston Hughes, all in conjunction with studying a work such as The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man by James Weldon Johnson.

In the second, the teacher asks the students to find songs that they know that can be compared to a work or works the class is reading. I use this second method in conjunction with teaching The Scarlet Letter. The following are guidelines I give my students:

Student Guidelines

For this activity, you will be linking ideas in The Scarlet Letter to songs you hear, so you'll need to find songs that remind you of the novel's theme, plot, characters, setting, language, literary devices (metaphor, symbols, irony, allusions, and so on), and tone. Please try to find three *different* songs that remind you of three *different* aspects of the novel. (That is, you cannot find three songs that deal only with the main character.) Although you could find three songs that relate to three different characters, I encourage you to branch out and use songs to discuss plot, theme, language, tone, setting, etc.

Next, write one or more paragraphs for each song, explaining why it reminds you of the novel. Make sure that each piece of writing includes the following:

- A topic sentence that includes the titles of both the novel and the song, as well as your main idea.
- Supporting details that clearly explain why this song reminds you of the novel or some aspect of the novel. Use exact quotes from both the novel and the song in your paragraph.
- Transitional words and phrases that make your ideas cohesive.
- Spelling, punctuation, grammar, and mechanics that show you have proofread and corrected your own work to the best of your ability.

►

- Parenthetical citations that show where the quotes can be found in the novel.

Turn in a copy of the song with each piece of writing. (If your song contains profanity, please omit that from your copy, leaving a blank space or dashes.)

If you cannot find a song to work with, you may link the novel to one or more poems. These should not be poems we have already discussed in class. Please remember to include copies of the poems you use with your writings.

Here's a sample writing comparing Pearl Jam's *Ten* to Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*.

Comparing Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter and Pearl Jam's Ten

Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*.
Pearl Jam's *Ten*. (Compact Disc. Sony, 1991.)

When I listen to Pearl Jam's song "Jeremy," I visualize the actions and attitude of a character named Pearl in *The Scarlet Letter*. To begin with, Pearl Jam's song sings of a young boy whose father "didn't give attention" and "didn't give affection." In *The Scarlet Letter*, Pearl's father has chosen not to give her attention either.

At one point in the plot, Pearl asks her father to promise to "take my hand and my mother's hand tomorrow at noon tide" (144). Pearl's father refuses to hold her hand, thus refusing to give her attention just like Jeremy's father refuses Jeremy.

Also, in the song, Jeremy is described as "King Jeremy the Wicked." Pearl is described as wicked when she is referred to as "an imp of evil" (86). Throughout chapter six, Pearl's description reveals how wicked she seems to her mother. Finally, Jeremy in the Pearl Jam song reminds me of Pearl in the novel because he is picked on by the other kids at school until he lashes out, and it seems as if the kids "unleashed a lion." Likewise, Pearl is the object of the Puritan children's ridicule. When they see Pearl, they yell that she is "the likeness of the scarlet letter" and then the children "fling mud" at Pearl and her mother (94). Pearl rushes at these children, screaming and ready to fight, and causes them to run away.

In conclusion, Jeremy and Pearl, although they are children with over 300 years between their experiences, actually seem to be the same angry, sad child suffering the same angry, sad fate.

This activity is an effective way to encourage students to look more closely at literary elements in what they read as well as what they listen to. If time allows, students enjoy playing their songs for the rest of the class and sharing their written comparisons.

Terri Fisher-Reed, Jackson R-2 School District, Jackson, Missouri

Imitating the British Romantic Poets

This is an exercise that I have used with seniors studying British literature. I find that the Romantic poets are not only a favorite of my students but also that these writers and their work lend themselves to substantial and constructive literary analysis, innovative thought, and creative writing achievements.

The goal of this activity is to allow the students to show their understanding and appreciation for at least one of the five major British Romantic poets of the early nineteenth century.

Prior to this assignment, my students have paraphrased and analyzed many poems by Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, and Keats, and have spent time identifying thematic and stylistic characteristics of these writers. Then in this activity, students create poems in the manner of these writers. Students are not only challenged to show their comprehension of the poet's subject matter and style, but also encouraged to write a creative piece.

Writing Suggestions

- Write a poem that shows Wordsworth's perspective on leaf raking.
- Write a poem that displays Coleridge's perspective on and reaction to a screaming baby in a restaurant.
- Write a poem that reveals Byron's perspective regarding the forty-year monogamous relationship of a married heterosexual couple.
- Write a poem that emphasizes Shelley's perspective on an individual taking out the garbage the morning after an enjoyable date.
- Write a poem that stresses Keats's feelings after having landed on the moon twelve hours earlier.

One notices by the uniqueness of each of these suggestions that the student must consider key traits of both content and style of the writer.

For example, Wordsworth's devotion to nature might make one wonder if he ever actually raked a leaf at Dove Cottage. Commenting about the sanctity of childhood in "Frost at Midnight," Coleridge has his beloved Hartley appear asleep by his side. What would the poet do with a screaming infant nearby instead? Could Byron ever conceive of a forty-year-long faithful relationship, never mind write a poem portraying one? How could the Platonic Shelley balance freedom and love with the need to work, to pay bills, and to put out the trash? And would Keats, constant seeker of an idealistic plane, ever be content even after having ascended to the moon?

▶

These intentionally altered situations for each of the poets encourage the student to give careful thought and speculation to how a particular poet would respond in the given situation. Simple directives to the students at the beginning of this assignment include: Be creative. Stay in tune with your poet of choice. And have fun!

This activity has resulted in many interesting and imaginative student poems, including an ode to leaf raking, a dramatic monologue about intrusive children, a satire on a very long marriage, a lyric about love in the face of daily responsibilities, and a sonnet of despair even from the craters of the moon.

This assignment has worked for me both as a requirement and as an extra credit task. It proves valuable either as an anticipated assignment or as a review exercise at the unit's end. The class as a whole can help evaluate and assess individual efforts by judging how closely each work seems to match the imitated poet's subject matter and style and how much creativity is shown.

Michael T. Duni, Suffield High School, Suffield, Connecticut

Paste-Pot Poetry

My students enjoy doing paste-pot poetry. We bring in all sorts of interesting magazines and clip out interesting words and phrases. These are saved over a period of time. Then we spend one class period pasting down poetry. We try to have a "theme" or topic sometimes. Last year, just before Valentine's Day, we did "love." We had some serious and some funny poems to share. The finished poems look a bit like ransom notes. The students appreciate the artistry of the piece as well as take time to "find" or "trade" for just the right word to complete an idea.

Mary Ann Yedinak
yedinak@sycamoreschool.org

Dead Poet Interviews

I want poetry for my students to be "alive" and engaging. I also want them to connect the poet's life and the work of the poet.

During the year I spent as the eighth-grade reading teacher in a curriculum called "The Art of Inquiry," I was assigned a unit of poetry where the primary focus of the unit, oddly enough, was the incorporation of non-fiction materials. I chose to begin with the lives of poets. There was certainly enough biographical information in the school library on a variety of poets that would allow for individual student research, and a student-generated research report was stated as a goal for the curriculum.

But how, I wondered, could I incorporate the biography of a poet with his or her poetry in a new and interesting manner? Since I wanted the poets and their works to be "alive" for each student, why not pretend just that? By giving each student an imaginary opportunity to interview a poet, I would in the process give students a chance to study biographies and poetic form and content. And why not let the student answer for the poets, becoming each poet's voice? What better way to make the dead poets "live"? Thus I developed the "Dead Poet Interview."

For this assignment, each student was required to pick a name from a list of poets that were represented in the school library.

I selected American poets, all deceased, since that group was well represented in the library's holdings. Our list of potential poets included Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost, Langston Hughes, Sylvia Plath, Arna Bontemps, Carl Sandburg, Walt Whitman, Paul Dunbar, and others.

Each student was required to be familiar with three to five poems by the poet and research the poet's life. Students were then told that they must interview this poet and record this interview in a question and answer format. It was only necessary to explain once that the poet would not be available for an actual interview, that the name of this project was the Dead Poet Interview and that the student would pretend an interview has taken place.

Students were told that they would develop a series of questions for the interview and develop a series of answers as they thought the poet would have answered them.

I also asked students to include six of the following eight biographical questions in their interviews.

- When and where were you born?
- Where and when did you die?
- Did anything that happened to you in your life become part of a poem?
- Where did you live while you wrote your poetry?
- What were some of the topics you wrote about in your poetry?
- Are any of the events or popular movements in Ameri-

▶

can history (ex: war, civil rights) in your poems? If so, which ones? If not, why not?

- What did people think about your poems?
- Did you like any other poets or writers? Who?

I also wanted the students to develop questions and answers about the content or structure of the poet's poetry and think about what the poet meant when he or she wrote a particular line. For this reason I required that each student come up with four questions about specific poems.

Finally, I required each student to come up with one question and answer completely unrelated to either poetry or biography, but still in keeping with the voice of the poet. This made a total of 12 questions each student needed to have to complete this interview. I suggested that the introductory paragraph would contain a description of where the interview took place and a short description about the poet's appearance (when alive, of course!)

Time was provided in class to review research materials for this assignment. I allocated three days. Despite this short period of time, the results were even better than I had hoped. Students did not worry about "how many pages"—instead, they paid attention to giving their poet a voice.

Some of the students created wonderful introductions.

"I met Walt Whitman at his house in West Hills, Long Island, New York. He looked tired, older, and wiser than Old Man Time himself. His wrinkled eyes had a sparkle of wisdom and understanding, and his long gossamer beard could almost, it seemed, blow away with the wind. I asked him if I could ask him a few questions. " (Ray Lorenzoni)

"I met Emily Dickinson yesterday afternoon. I wasn't sure if I was going to be able to talk to her because I heard that when strangers come to visit, she runs and hides. Even if she invites them, she stays out of sight. I knew she was going to be home,

▶

TEACHER TALK

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

Does anyone have any suggestions for teaching Eliot's "Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock?" I'll soon be teaching it to 11th graders who are not very strong readers, and they will need a lot of guidance. Any effective approaches, activities, and/or assignments out there?

Trayce Diskin

A band called "The Crash Test Dummies" has a song entitled "Afternoons and Coffeespoons" on their first (only?) CD. It is about a man dying of lung cancer and is a direct allusion to Prufrock. "Someday I'll have a disappearing hairline/someday I'll wear pajamas in the daytime/and afternoons will be measured out, measured with coffeespoons and T.S. Eliot. . . ."

I show the lyrics and play the song after we have read through Prufrock once or twice. I ask the students what the song is about, and eventually they figure it out. I then ask what techniques/tones are similar and the students create charts for similarities and differences. We then go back to Prufrock and re-read.

It's important that the students know that lyrics are just poems set to music. Helping them analyze lyrics (especially if they get to choose their own and present them to the class) aids in their poetry study.

Lisa St. John
Lily83165@aol.com

I've seen a parody of the poem—something like "The Love Song of J. Morris Housecat" (http://members.xoom.com/Anitra/Sid/prufcat.html)—that was pretty fun. I've had students rewrite a portion (given a certain line minimum) inserting their own subject—"The Love Song of J. Mischievous Student" or "The Love Song of J. Macho Jock." As long as it's done in a fun manner and proper warnings are given, I've never had a problem with it.

Lisa Lawrence
lawrel@www.jenksusa.k12.ok.us

Take a look at the March 1999 issue of ENGLISH JOURNAL for an article by Derek Soles, "The Prufrock Makeover." *(Visit the CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS Web page at http://www/ncte.org/notesplus for a link to this article.)*

Virginia Monseau
vmonseau@cc.ysu.edu

though, because she hasn't left her house in twenty years.

When I knocked on the door of her yellow house surrounded by tall hedges, she opened the door slightly. I saw she was dressed all in white, and she looked very scared. When she saw me standing there, she left the door open for me to come in, but she ran into the next room and slammed the door behind her. But she was kind enough to let me ask the following questions through the closed door." (Christine Cole)

Other students developed wonderful responses to questions that demonstrated a remarkable understanding of the poet they chose.

Interview with Emily Dickinson

Q: What did people think about your poems?

A: Well, according to what I've been hearing up in heaven, I became more popular after I died. When I was living, ten of my poems were published and the public still wasn't crazy about female poets. Now though, great majorities of people love my poetry, and I'm just famous!

Q: Did you like any other poets or writers? Who?

A: I greatly admired Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning and John Keats.

Q: In your poem #712 –

A: #712?

Q: Yeah, after you died and people found your poems they numbered them since none were titled. The poem I'm referring to is the one where you said, "Because I could not stop for death, He kindly stopped for me." I was wondering, what did you mean?

A: It meant that whether you're ready for death or not, it will still come for you, even if you do not seek it out. (Angelina Ramos)

Interviews with e. e. cummings

Q: Did anything in your life become part of a poem?

A: Well, actually, I do recall writing in a poem called, "somewhere I have traveled, gladly beyond" about one of my wives. I also wrote a book about the time I was in prison.

Q: I hope you don't mind my asking this, Mr. cummings, but I heard you had three wives. Exactly which one did you write about in this poem?

A: To be honest with you, I can't recall which of the three I wrote about. Well, I mean, I've been gone for quite a while, so you've got to give me some credit, lady! But, I do remember that I wrote about one of the three because I was depressed and upset that we had divorced, and I deeply missed her. (Julie Margolin)

Q: What did people think about your poetry?

A: Most people thought my poetry was strange because it was different than other poems. Many people didn't get it, but if you were thoughtful and creative, you would make up your own people.

Q: Did you like any other poets?

A: Well, no. The truth is most of them bored me to death. I think I am a genius, the best poet in the world. (Cara Knapper)

A simple rubric was designed to award points for incorporating twelve questions, an engaging opening, capitalization, and correctly punctuating poetry titles.

The students were enthusiastic, often sharing and comparing information about their chosen poets. The resulting reports were entertaining to read, laced with "graveyard" humor, and completely individual. For these eighth-grade students, dead American poets are not dead at all!

Colette Marie Bennett, Brookfield High School, Brookfield, Connecticut

FOCUS ON MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

A Moral Choice

As an African American educator, one of my main concerns is that we all need to be liberated from schooling that perpetuates America's myths. One such myth that constrains our freedom of thought and our ability to pursue social justice concerns our national identity.

Most of the pre-service teachers I taught at Santa Clara University for 12 years were White. Because most of them accepted the myth that America is a White nation that is *becoming* more diverse, they also believed that their mission as teachers was to help these diverse "others" to be like them. These relatively privileged White future teachers could scarcely imagine that there is anything wrong with America or that multicultural education has anything to do with them—with what is wrong with their education.

When we discussed what schools do, they struggled with the realization that while White supremacy racism denies equitable education to the poor and students of color, miseducation for domination denies White teachers and students opportunities to develop their humanity—including understanding of and real respect for diversity.

The consequences of miseducation were clearly evident when a clash of viewpoints erupted about new history text-

▶

books that were about to be adopted in California in 1992.

Declaring that the books were "so much better" than the ones they had, many White teachers were eager to get the California State Board of Education's Curriculum Commission, on which I served, to approve these books. On the other hand, a diverse array of parents and educators argued that these supposed "multicultural" books perpetuated racism by distorting the history and heritages of people of color and by centering the White American immigrant experience as the normative standard. What were some of the concerns about these books that these White teachers, as well as my pre-service students, failed to see?

American Indians, described in the texts as "the First Immigrants" who "came" to the Americas across the Bering Strait, questioned the presentation of this Western scientific theory as fact. Ignoring the wide range of theories about the origins of indigenous peoples in early America fundamentals denies their humanity.

A Chicana teacher tearfully confided to me her reservations about presenting the chapter on the Aztecs of ancient Mexico to her Mexican American students because the text mentions their religious practice of "human sacrifice" without discussing the Indigenous cultural viewpoint.

Muslim educators and parents were perplexed and distressed that instead of a human being, a camel—intended to symbolize the importance of the trans-Saharan trade in north Africa—was used to illustrate the spread of the religion of Islam.

The textbook version of African enslavement was a story of how "Forced Immigrants came" to America because their greedy local rulers participated in the "trade." Not examined was the long tradition of slavery among European nations, the very different nature of lineage-based bondage among Indigenous "African" peoples, or the cultural logic that permitted the Catholic Church to approve the so-called "Just Wars" that Europeans instigated among rival rulers to sustain the transatlantic slave trade. In fact, there were no "Africans" then, but diverse ethnic peoples.

The sixth-grade narrative of "our early human origins" included blatantly negative stereotypes. The chapter opened with a description of "naked, dark-skinned" proto-humans on the plains of East Africa millions of years ago eating the "marrow oozing from a bloody bone." Suppressing the boisterous hoots and howls of 11-year-olds in the classroom would be tough enough; how would you help a Black student get through this experience?

The Teacher's Edition directed the teachers to say that a cave-dwelling European Cro-Magnon Man with a "larger brain" in an illustration "looked just like us."

Although the textbooks were eventually approved with some minor changes, a parade of diverse voices asked "Who is included in this textbook's idea of 'us'?"

The majority of teachers who supported the books ignored the problems of perspective bias and defended the monocultural (White) viewpoint as multicultural. They

▶

Student Web Publishing Resources

I've written an article that addresses the issues schools need to consider before allowing students to publish material on their school Web site.

Included in this article is a link for a suggested form to use when getting permission from parents and students to publish information.

I've also included a link to a suggested school policy for publishing material.

The article appears on the Franklin Institute Online Web site at http://www.fi.edu/fellows/fellow1/jan99/index.html.

I've published additional articles related to this topic that may be of interest, too. The following resources are on a Web site that I've designed for a technology project here in Indiana.

I've created a power point pivoted on this article which can be seen here: http://www.buddyproject.org/teach/empower/default.asp.

Also, read my article on creating a school Web team, broken into age levels: http://www.buddyproject.org/tool/design/1team.asp.

And an article on suggested resources for Web development: http://www.buddyproject.org/tool/design/1resource.asp.

I am in the process of creating my own Web site. I've published so much but it's scattered throughout the Internet. So someday soon it will be on my Web site at http://www.tammypayton.net.

Tammy Payton
tpayton@dmrtc.net

reframed the controversy as an ethnic conflict, asking "Are you saying that a White author cannot write accurately and with sensitivity about the experiences of other groups?" The author's race was not our concern; the worrisome issue being ignored was the social interests that the author's perspective represented.

Things haven't gotten much better over the last eight years. While subsequent revisions included removing the camel, the problem of perspective bias exists not only in textbooks but in the presumably academic scholarship and neutral scientific knowledge the authors of these books draw upon.

Is there a role for White teachers in multicultural education? Yes, indeed. But they must first recognize that the struggle for education as a basic human right, like the Civil Rights Movement, is a moral struggle.

The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights is instructive: "Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations. . . ."

To play a significant role, White teachers need to learn specific strategies of curriculum inclusion, culturally sensitive (relevant) pedagogy, and skills for promoting understanding, tolerance, friendship and respect for diversity in particular communities.

Working in communities of color, White teachers need to hone these skills in close partnership with more experienced colleagues who have the community's best interests at heart.

Culturally and socioeconomically encapsulated White students living within gated communities must overcome different obstacles in achieving the "full development of [their] human personality" than those that students in inner-city communities typically encounter.

In solidarity with other teachers and parents who are well-respected in the community, White teachers must join the "minority" that will be attempting to meet students' real learning and development needs. The alternative is an education that fails to enable teachers and students to challenge injustice and thus perpetuates domination and what I call "dysconsciousness"—a habit of mind that accepts the status quo as a given.

Advocating equity and social justice and becoming active community-building agents for social change are educational and moral missions that good teachers of all colors and ethnicities need to embrace for the sake of their own humanity.

White teachers have as great a stake as the rest of us in this kind of education—if they are to be free to choose their own humanity versus the tyranny of White supremacy racism. For "whiteness" is, as James Baldwin said, "a state of mind; it's even a moral choice."

Joyce E. King is Associate Provost at Medgar Evers College of The City University of New York and Chairperson of the Commission on Research in Black Education, an initiative of the American Educational Research Association.

This article is reprinted with permission from TEACHING TOLERANCE (Fall 2000). Visit the TEACHING TOLERANCE Web page at http://www.splcenter.org/teachingtolerance/tt-index.html.

TEACHER TALK

How Do You Stay Refreshed?

In the January 2001 issue of CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS, we asked readers to tell us what they do to stay refreshed in their work. Here are two responses we received.

An invigorating way to stay refreshed and rejuvenated? Work on your National Board Certification—although you won't feel that way until you are finished!

Nancy Gardner
nancygardner@mgsd.k12.nc.us

I go to conferences and make presentations. This gives me the opportunity to discuss issues with other teaching professionals and gather new ideas for use in the classroom. The NCTE conference in November is always a wonderful experience. Also, I try to go to one of the regional spring conferences sponsored by our state chapter of NCTE.

Any professional challenge stimulates me—try teaching graduate courses as an adjunct, undertaking new responsibilities within the school district, or even pursuing National Board Certification.

Jean Siewicki
jeansiewicki@hotmail.com

*How do **you** stay refreshed? E-mail your responses to fkaufmann@ncte.org.*

TEACHER TALK

Webfolios

I'd like to learn more about webfolios. What would be good sources for me to check? I also have a few questions.

1. How savvy do students (or teachers) have to be to create webfolios?

2. Do students enter the work at school or from home or both? Many of my students will not have computers at home, and because they are taking seven classes in a seven-period day, they will have difficulty in getting to the computer lab except at lunch time.

3. Can some students in a class have computers and others not?

4. How do you handle the problem of parents not wanting their child to have information posted on a web site?

Thanks in advance for your help.

Mary-Sue Gardetto
gardetto@erinet.com

Great questions!

Webfolios are a webbed version of the portfolio. I find the advantages involve audience and being digital. Webfolios provide a wider audience to the students. The digital aspect allows for multiple presentations, multimedia, and easier editing capability.

I have a bunch of links from http://www.tnellen.com/cybereng/webfolio.html. Try http://www.tnellen.com/school/proof.html for assessment of the use of technology in education.

Here are responses to your questions:

Question 1. I have found that the students pick it up real fast. I begin with a couple of forms, templates (their homepage and a paper template), and then they learn by doing and viewing using "view document source" or "page source" to see the code.

Now, as for teachers being savvy—it's not as crucial as one would expect. Teachers learn from the students as the students are doing the coding in class. This is a hands-on class. The students come in and work the entire class—writing web pages, email, communicating with classmates on issues. We do lots of peer review and tele-mentoring. It is sort of on-the-job training. Very easy actually. Just do it.

Question 2. My classroom is a computer room, and has been since 1984. So students come in early, stay after school, and use it when they have a free period, in addition to 45 minutes every day, five days a week.

More are getting computers at home, but I teach in a Title I school in New York City. Seventy-seven percent of our students live below the poverty level. Also many have jobs. They can work on computers from public libraries, work, and more from home now. These classes have seemed to make our students more proactive about getting the access because they have come to realize how important it is in their future.

Question 3. Of course, we aren't quite up to 1 to 1 yet with 3,400 students. In the computer classes, 34 computers per classroom—one computer per student—wrote grants to do this. I have been able to get great support from non-profits to help wire, set up a Linux server, and maintain the whole setup.

We are constantly looking for ways to make a 1 to 1 possible. But all students in the class have a machine. We also have a club which helps maintain the computers. We do not have vandalism, either, because students respect the computers.

We also let the students use them—that is important. I have heard horror stories and then found out the students never got to use the machines because teachers talked too much or didn't know enough to use them. If you can get a computer room, let the students use them, shut up, and watch and learn. Then you can get down to your pedagogy.

Question 4. This is an elective and the parents and the students have to sign a permission slip and an acceptable-use policy to be in our cyber classes. There are non-computer classes to accommodate those who choose not to be in a cyber class. But we have never had that problem. We are over-subscribed and we create new classes each term. Our cyber classes have the best attendance in the school and our students do better on the standardized tests than the non-cyber classes. Our cyber classes are now one of the draws of our high school to the middle schools.

This year, we had more than 300 e-mail applications which complemented the paper applications. They wanted to show us they were wired! It is about choice, so no, we don't have that problem. We are slowly changing the culture, one student at a time.

My Web site at http://www.tnellen.com/cybereng/ will get you started.

Ted Nellen
tnellen@iris.host4u.net

Using the Web for High School Student Writers

By today's pedagogical standards, I am a Constructivist. I have been one since my first days as a teacher of writing in 1974.

I have always believed the Deweyan idea that we learn by doing, and having my students do is the best way to have my students learn how to learn.

My classroom is student-centered, not teacher-centered. Watching students work out problems in groups or in isolation is education at its best.

Constructivists use this term because students construct a solution on their own or in collaboration with others.

The World Wide Web provides the perfect environment for the writing process. I believe this because the Web transcends desktop publishing and presentation programs.

The Web provides a student writer with complete control over the creation, from inspiration to publication. Student writers have a wider audience, a more democratic audience, and a venue for peer review when they use the Internet.

However, once access is achieved, the next question is what do I do?

I will attempt to provide the reader with some insights about how I have transformed a traditional writing class into a Webbed writing class.

I will provide a glimpse of our students and the electrified environment, the Web tools we use and how we use them, the Webfolio (or wired portfolio), and student Web writing results and teacher resources. . . .

Ted Nellen, formerly a teacher at Murry Bergtraum High School, New York, New York; now in the Alternative High School Superintendency, New York City Board of Education.

Read the full version of this article, containing Web links to student examples, on the CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS Web page at http://www.ncte.org/notesplus.

This excerpt is taken from WEAVING A VIRTUAL WEB: PRACTICAL APPROACHES TO NEW INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES (NCTE, 2000), edited by Sibylle Gruber. To order this book, call 877-369-6283 or order online at http://www.ncte.org.

FOCUS ON MEDIA LITERACY

**This themed section continues through page 21.*

What Is Media Literacy?

Media Literacy is an international movement in education. Though many of the people engaged in teaching media literacy are English teachers, media literacy is practiced by teachers of Social Studies, History, Math and Science.

There are really no disciplines that cannot integrate media literacy because the media are involved in almost all parts of our lives; from citizenship to personal expression, from economics to entertainment, from religious practice to the transmission of cultural values, we are constantly immersed in a mediated reality.

But media literacy is not an innoculation against media. It is an invitation and a means to develop critical thinking, critical autonomy, and pleasure. For all the manipulation and demagoguery that is possible through media, for all the modeling of incivility or outright hostility, media also offer opportunities for discovery and pleasure; the same pleasure we get from literature or from a call to action that comes at just the right time.

Media transmit narratives and we humans need narratives. We conceptualize the world as if events had a beginning, a middle, and an end. It is how we make order from chaos.

One of the underlying principles of media literacy is that all media are constructions. They are made things, made with an intent and point of view.

Len Masterman, a leading scholar of media education and author of TEACHING THE MEDIA, writes:

> The central unifying concept of Media Education is that of representation. The media mediate. They do not reflect reality but re-present it. The media, that is, are symbolic or sign systems. Without this principle no media education is possible. From it, all else flows (Source: STRATEGIES FOR MEDIA LITERACY).

It follows from this that media are not value-free. There is no such thing as "just a story."

Someone, with a particular intent, created the piece you are experiencing for a particular purpose. It might be to communicate an idea; it might be to deliver your eyes to a commercial message.

Media literacy is an opportunity to participate with media in a conscious, active way. This can protect us from the manipulations of media makers and offer us the possibility

▶

of making our own creations. Media can be the means by which students find their own voices and analytical tools. Media literacy in the classroom can be the means to develop higher order thinking skills, creativity, and cooperation.

If you are interested in exploring media literacy, consider joining the NCTE Assembly on Media Arts. Annual dues are $10 and members receive MEDIA MATTERS, a newsletter highlighting issues, viewpoints, materials, and events related to the study of media. To join, send a check or money order for $10, payable to Assembly for Media Arts, to Ann Wilder, 23 Glenmore Dr., Durham, NC 27707. For more information on the Assembly, contact Alan Teasley, 1213 Carroll St., Durham, NC 27707-1311; 915-560-2029; teasleab@dpsne.net.

There is also a new NCTE media listserv you might enjoy. To subscribe to the listserve, send an e-mail to <majordomo@lists.ncte.org>. In the body of your message write: "subscribe media". The listserv is just getting started but has already begun to be a clearinghouse for people seeking help or exchanging ideas.

Andrew Garrison is Director of the NCTE Commission on Media Arts and Assistant Professor of Film and Video, University of Texas at Austin. © 2001 Andrew Garrison.

Turning the Camera on the Class

I didn't tell the class of ninth- and tenth-graders what I was up to, and, initially, they took everything in stride, barely paying attention to what was happening in the front of the room. So what if Mr. Lanza, the media coordinator, was fooling around with the back of the TV monitor? Perhaps something was broken. As soon as the class had settled down and taken out their reading for the day, Mr. Lanza picked up his video camera and began walking around the classroom, taping people at random, often only inches away from their faces. The students sat up straight. A few giggled nervously. What was going on here? And, more importantly, were they being taped and, if so, how did they look?

Everyone was acutely aware of the camera and TV monitor during the entire twenty minutes of the exercise. In fact, they became more conscious of them as time passed, and after five minutes or so, stopped looking at Mr. Lanza and the students currently being stalked, and began, instead, to watch everything on the TV. The image had replaced the real life experience around them.

Background: Others See Themselves on TV and Reflect

What did it mean then, to become an image on TV, to be both a public and private self?

This question was at the heart of the reading the students had done the night before. During the fifties and sixties, Harvard psychiatrist Robert Coles traveled the South, and among the many questions he had for people whose lives were being altered by the Civil Rights Movement was how seeing themselves on TV had affected them. In his article, "You See that There's More than You in the World" (PANORAMA, January 1981), he quotes the mother of one of the children to first integrate the New Orleans public schools:

> I know we're "news." But when I see the newspaper stories, they seem to be about other people; when I see myself on the television set, though—that's a different story. I go through the whole business again! It all comes back! And the next day, I'll be walking past the mob, and I can't believe what I'm thinking to myself: will they show this, too, on the set, and do I look all right? One day I had my head lowered too much, and my aunt saw me on TV and she said I looked bad, real bad. But she had been with me, and she didn't say a word then! It was only when she saw me on TV that she got to noticing and worrying. (1981, p.76)

Another person Coles interviewed, a minister who supported the children and their parents, stated that,"when I saw myself on television, it was as if I'd lost myself, and I was someone else." (1981, p.76)

The Class's Response to the Taping

I wanted my ninth- and tenth-graders to connect their own responses to what they had read, but, first, I had to get their attention. They were far too mesmerized by the camera to take in passages I noted for them, or to answer the questions I asked.

At the end of the taping, we looked at the entire sequence of events once more. They watched, in thrall, laughing, nudging fellow classmates as they appeared on camera. When it was over, I asked them to chronicle their responses as they were being taped and as they watched the footage of the class and to try to relate them to the experiences noted by Coles's interviewees.

Their papers were wonderful and insightful. They all observed how much the group's behavior was altered by the presence of the camera. One student wrote,"Tigger saw it [the camera] as a advertising tool and made it very clear that he was a Chicago Bulls fan. The TV transformed the classroom into a very quiet and wary atmosphere and it looks as if no one wanted to act like themselves on TV."

Another student, whose father had had some experience being filmed, had this insight:

> Many people were not sitting like they do in class, like leaning back on the chair. The presence of the camera changed the whole class, and the reality was not shown. My dad works in the agriculture division for a Japanese corpo-

▶

> ration. When my dad was in St. Louis, there was a drought. . . . Some news reporters interviewed him. . . . He said that they made him walk into the office in a specific way. . . . I think having a camera in a room is like having guests. You don't talk like you do normally and you don't act like you do normally.

Students noted how some people had played to the camera, trying to be filmed as much as possible, while others hid their faces when they found themselves on the monitor. One girl made a curtain of her hair. However, even some of these camera-shy people were aware of complicated feelings about what was happening. One such student put it this way: "Though the majority felt self-conscious and shy at the thought, everyone seemed to want to be taped. . . . There does seem to be some form of flirtation between the students and the camera."

Some students noted how odd it felt to see themselves on the screen and, like the minister, how disconnected they felt from this new self. One girl wrote, "Although in some ways I felt very in touch with how I acted, in other ways I felt detached. I'm so used to watching 'regular' television, something that is pretaped, that when you watch something as it happens it feels almost unreal."

She went on to try to probe why this experience was so much more unsettling than being photographed. "When you get a picture taken, you are usually posed, you have control over the way you look. . . . But when you are watching yourself on television as you are being filmed you cannot determine your actions or appearance before they have seen them. You are watching yourself be you."

All of the students made sure I understood how intrusive they found the whole experience. Even their descriptions of the event were phrased in terms of violation, of the "piercing view" or "penetrating sight" of the camera as it surveyed the room.

Our Relationship to the Image

We then read together Studs Terkel's article "Image, Image on the Tube, Tell Me Who I Am" (THE MEDIA READER, 1972).

The class was fascinated by Terkel's anecdote about how Richard Speck, the murderer of eight nurses in Chicago, realized he was indeed a murderer only after the superintendent of police announced his name on TV:

> "Publicly informed by a known somebody that he had done something, Speck, a nobody, knew it had to be so" (p. 186).

Do we trust the image more than what we see or experience firsthand? Hadn't the class begun to observe how what was happening right before them translated itself onto the screen where the record of expressions and reactions became, in some sense, more "real" to them and anybody else who watched than what they observed at the moment of unfolding?

How could they reconcile this trust in the image with their understanding that everyone in the class had altered their behavior in the presence of the camera? And wasn't it possible for a person to become lost in "image," in the public self that is only part of who we are?

For the rest of the week, our conversations about media ranged wide, fed always by their new sensitivity to what it means to be on camera.

Some Applications

As follow-up exercises, students could be asked to engage in a number of activities. With so many "reality TV" shows recently on commercial television, it is easy to ask students to analyze, for example, the behavior of the fourteen students filmed at Highland High School in Fox's *AMERICAN HIGH*, and to note the ways in which the director/producer of the series, R. J. Cutler, weaves together his footage with that which the students themselves shoot.

As Cutler admitted in an interview for *THE NEW YORK TIMES*, "The great Orwellian irony of the phrase reality television is that there's nothing real about it all. Whereas we, as documentary filmmakers, know that we are not reproducing reality—we're storytellers, trying to tell the stories we find as truly and entertainingly as possible" ("An Inside Look at How It Feels To Be a Teenager," THE NEW YORK TIMES, July 30, 2000. Section 2: 29–30).

Where are those intersections between storytelling and unmediated human behavior? We are made to assume that shows like *AMERICAN HIGH*, *SURVIVOR* and *MTV's THE REAL WORLD*, or *OPRAH*, or *THE DAVID LETTERMAN SHOW*, or even the infamous wedding of Darva Congers and Rick Rockwell on *WHO WANTS TO MARRY A MULTI-MILLIONAIRE?* simply record events as they unfold. However, all of these programs are edited, and the camera is carefully placed.

▶

2001 National Media Education Conference

The Alliance for a Media Literate America, formerly the Partnership for Media Education, is hosting the 2001 National Media Education Conference June 23–26 in Austin, Texas. Attend workshops, panel discussions, plenary sessions, and keynote presentations on the theme "Unleashing Creativity."

For more information, phone (512) 795-8033, e-mail pguyton@HorizonMeetings.com, or visit http://www.nmec.org.

Students could be asked to tape and analyze some footage of any non-fiction television show. When does the camera cut away from the "main character" and to whom? When a skinhead announces some particularly offensive opinion on The Jerry Springer Show, does the camera show Jerry's response (letting us see he does not share these attitudes) or a pocket of African-Americans in the audiences who are outraged, or various skinhead sympathizers who nod in agreement? What difference does it make?

If editing creates a continuity of meaning from various fragmented images, then the choices matter a lot. What are we being orchestrated to feel, even as we are being led to forget that cameras are mediating this "live" experience for us?

When the coroner described injuries to Nicole Simpson's body during the 1994 pretrial hearings, why did the camera cut to a close-up of O. J. Simpson? What were we being asked to consider, to look for?

And, of course, the easiest and most obvious activity would be for students to become filmmakers themselves, taking video cameras into otherwise low-key situations, like the school cafeteria or club meetings, to document on tape and in journals what happens as they turn the camera on others, trying simply to record "real life."

Recommended Readings

Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film by Eric Barnouw. Oxford University Press, 1980.

"Survivor Star: One Man Is an Island Villain" by Bill Carter. The New York Times, August 16, 2000, sec. E:1 and 3.

"Suffer the Children" by Nancy Franklin. Rev. of American High. The New Yorker, August 21 and 28, 2000:168–69.

New Challenges for Documentary, edited by Alan Rosenthal. University of California Press, 1988.

Recommended Media Resources [non-fiction films/shows that center on the lives/world of teenagers]

American High. Prod. R.J. Cutler. Fox. Debuted Wednesday, August 2 through mid-September 2000.

High School, 1969; High School II, 1994. Both directed by Frederick Wiseman. Distributed by Zipporah Films, 1 Richdale Ave. Cambridge, Ma.

Seventeen, 1982, directed by Joel DeMott and Jeff Kreines. Distributed by First Run Features, 153 Waverly Pl., New York, N.Y.

Streetwise, 1986. Directed by Martin Bell.

Alice Cross, Horace Greeley High School, Chappaqua, New York

The Center for Media Literacy

The Center for Media Literacy (CML) was established to promote critical thinking about the media and to provide leadership, training, and resources for media education in schools and community organizations.

The CML Web site at http://www.medialit.org includes a resource catalog, calender of events, a page on media violence, and a reading room, under which you'll find a checklist of core resources, including "Videos," "Oldies but Goodies," and "Media Classics: Five Books That Should Be Staples on Your Shelf."

Also found on the CML site is a Sneak Peaks page, containing brief reviews of new resources such as The Web-Savvy Student: 10 Activities to Help Students Use the Internet Wisely; Seeing and Believing: How to Teach Media Literacy in the English Classroom; and The Hollywood Curriculum: Teachers and Teaching in the Movies.

The Center for Media Literacy also publishes a periodic electronic newsletter titled C.M.L. C•O•N•N•E•C•T, which includes news and announcements related to media literacy and media education. You can subscribe to this newsletter on the Center for Media Literacy Web site.

> *A media literate person doesn't know all the answers, but knows how to ask the right questions: Who created this message? Why? How and why did they choose what to include and what to leave out of this message? How is it intended to influence me? —from the "Frequently Asked Questions" Web page of the Center for Media Literacy site (www.medialit.org)*

TRACI'S LISTS OF TEN

"Traci's Lists of Ten" are lists of thoughtful teaching tips created by Traci Gardner, a former English teacher and now Online Resources Manager for NCTE. Visit http://www.ncte.org/notesplus to read other Lists of Ten.

Ten Television Analysis Writing Projects

I was asked by a colleague to develop writing projects that focus on television shows. Some of the assignments here will work for students who are analyzing several episodes of one show, some are clearly for students who are comparing two shows, and some invite comparisons among several shows. You can adjust them all so that they fit your students—cutting down the number of shows to be compared, for instance, if you don't think that your students can manage a larger number of parameters.

1. **[Gender]** Look at the characters in the shows that you've watched closely for this assignment, specifically focusing on the gender of the characters. How is their gender important to the roles that they play (or is it)? To what extent are the characters in roles that could not have been played by an actor of the opposite gender? Are the shows playing with gender? Write a paper that explores the ways that gender enhances or detracts from the shows that you're examining—consider all the major characters of the program, looking particularly at any stereotypes and any roles that break with more traditional gender roles.

Alternately, you might focus on a very specific character and write an analysis of how the program would be different if that character were the opposite gender. Here's an interesting example: originally, the creators of *The Practice* were looking for another male actor to add as a lawyer for the show. Instead, they found Camryn Manheim, who plays Ellenor Frutt. Once she was chosen, they wrote the script for her; but what if that character weren't in the program? How would it be different?

2. **[Realism or Stereotype?]** Consider the characters in the programs that you've watched. In what ways are the characters real, and in what ways do they seem to be stereotypes or caricatures? Do the characters have real emotions, and a full range of emotions? Or do they just have the emotions that seem politically correct for the time and place that the programs consider? Are their emotions predictable? Do they look like real people, or like models and pin-ups? Is their hair ever mussed? Do they get dirty? Does anyone ever go to the bathroom? Do they ever get sick? Do they grow at a normal rate? Write a paper that explores the degree of realism that the programs that you're examining for your paper.

Alternately, write a two-part paper. For part one, rewrite one of the episodes that you watched from a more realistic perspective—you can write a short story rather than a script. For part two, explain the decisions that you made to make the show more realistic, giving details both on the changes that you made and why you made them.

3. **[Commercials]** In addition to watching the television shows, pay careful attention to the commercials that come on. What products are advertised? What commercials are used? As you watch, make a complete list of the commercials and the order in which they appear. If there are repeats, be sure to note them. Once you have a list, look for connections. Just who is the audience for all those commercials—who would buy the products or services? Would the characters on the program be likely to buy the products or services? After you've gathered all the details on the audience for the commercials, apply that information to the television show. How does the audience for the commercials fit the programs? Based on the commercials that you see, who would you think that the television programs are aimed at? In your paper, explore the relationship between commercials and the television program, focusing on what you can tell about the audience for the program and their interests and desires.

Alternately, you are an advertising executive. Choose a product or service that is not advertised during the program that you've watched. Write a proposal that convinces your client (the decision maker at the company that makes the product or provides the service) to buy airtime during the program. To make your proposal convincing, you'll need to identify connections between the audience for the program, the audience for the kinds of commercials that are now being advertised during the program, and the people who buy your client's product or service.

4. **[Predictability]** To what degree are the shows that you are examining predictable? For example, most folks know the show *Gilligan's Island*. Do you remember the episode where Gilligan accidentally caused some trouble for everyone on the island? Who doesn't? All the episodes had that plot. What predictable things happen in the shows that you're watching, and how do these things help the program? (or do they hurt it?) For your paper, explore the predictability of the programs that you've watched and the writers' and directors' goals in relying on predictable devices.

Variation: brainstorm alternatives to the predictable devices that you've seen in the program you're examining. Choose two or three that are reasonable options, and write

▶

BARRY'S BULLETIN—A Resource for Media Educators

Barry's Bulletin is a "popular culture digest for media educators," created by Barry Duncan, a former member of the NCTE Commission on Media and past president of the Ontario-based Association for Media Literacy.

Barry's Bulletin includes lessons and activities on current, media-related events, reviews of recommended resources, and upcoming events of interest to media educators. The February issue, for example, includes a feature on Reality Television, which suggests questions and activities to use in exploring this new media phenomenon with students.

To read current issues of *Barry's Bulletin*, visit the "For Educators" page of the Media Awareness Network Web site at http://www.media-awareness.ca/eng/med/class/. (See the Media Awareness Network listing in "Web Sites on Media Literacy and Advertising," page 18.)

Barry Duncan is also the co-author of *Mass Media and Popular Culture* (Harcourt Brace, 1996) and presents workshops and keynote addresses on media literacy. For more information, you can e-mail him at baduncan@interlog.com or phone him at 416-233-8282.

a paper that explores how the program would be different if these options were chosen instead and what accounts for the choice that the program's writers have made (an example: it's not reasonable to suggest that a giant meteor will wipe out the castaways on *Gilligan's Island* before the Professor can find a solution to whatever trouble Gilligan has caused).

5. **[Clothes]** How do clothes and costumes play a role in the programs that you've watched? For each major character, record the clothes and accessories that they wear in each show. Once you've assembled your list, look for patterns for each character—and among and between characters. To what extent does the show use clothing, jewelry, and the like to communicate information about the characters, their lives, and their interests? Consider how the program would be different if everyone wore a school uniform—or for that matter, what if they all had on jeans and t-shirts (and not skin-tight, either!). Write a paper that explores the function that costumes play in the programs that you've watched.

6. **[Ratings]** Many television programs now use a ratings system to help adults decide whether programs are appropriate for the children they are caring for. The scale ranges from a Y for young children to an M for shows that are suitable for adults only. You can check out the details on the scale at the PTA web site—http://www.pta.org/programs/nbcguide.htm. For your paper, pay attention to the rating for the programs that you watched and consider whether the ratings were accurately applied. Your paper should pay attention to the details that are included in the definitions of the different ranks on the rating scale. Once you've analyzed the application of the ratings to your show and indicated whether the application was appropriate, you should go on to consider whether the scale itself is adequate.

7. **[Same Subject, Different Shows]** Choose television programs that consider the same subject or the same issue, but from different perspectives. For instance, if you wanted to think about lawyers and legal issues, you might choose *Ally McBeal*, *The Practice*, reruns of *LA Law*, and *Judge Mills Lane*. While these shows all consider similar issues and all focus on lawyers, they go about it in different ways and with different attitudes. You could choose different issues, of course—shows on medicine and doctors, shows on police, and so on. For your paper, compare the ways that the issues are dealt with—which things remain unchanged regardless of the show you're considering, and which things change? In addition to thinking about the similarities and differences, be sure to consider the reasons for the changes.

8. **[Time Capsule]** Imagine that the programs you've watched are all that have survived to tell future generations about our life and times. Imagine that a video recording of these programs has been discovered 500 years from now. Miraculously, the discoverers have found a way to watch the programs. What would they think of us and our world? Take on the role of one of the discoverers, and write a report to your home office explaining what you've learned about your ancestors based on the programs. Be sure that your report draws clear connections between the details of the program and the conclusions about your ancestors.

9. **[Role of Television]** Edward R. Murrow said, "Television in the main is being used to distract, delude, amuse, and insulate us." In light of Murrow's quotation, what role would you say that the programs that you're examining play? Do they distract? If so, from what, and how? Or do they delude? Who are they deluding? What methods do they use? If they amuse, whom do they amuse, and what techniques do they use? If they're insulating us, what are

▶

they insulating us from, and how do they go about it? Do they fill several of those roles? Or do you see them as filling roles that Murrow has not allowed for? In your paper, explain the roles that your television programs fill, providing examples and explanations from the shows that support your analysis.

10. **[Music & Sound Effects]** What roles do music and sound effects play in the programs that you watched? Are certain sounds associated with particular characters or themes? Are sounds matched to the mood of a character (or characters)? What do the sound effects add to the program—are they an integral part of the show, or just extra noise? In your paper, create a system for identifying the kinds of music or sound effects. Your system should account for the characteristics of the music or sound effects as well as when and how the music or sound effects are used. If certain pieces of music and sound effects are a regular part of the show, how are they used? And in what circumstances are additional pieces added?

Traci Gardner is NCTE Online Resources manager.

Web Sites on Media Literacy and Advertising

Adbusters Media Foundation (http://www.adbusters.org) Produces spoof ads, uncommercials, and media critiques in an attempt to "clean up advertising and consumerism's polluting effects on the mental and physical environment."

Cable in the Classroom Online (http://www.ciconline.com) A public service effort supported by 41 national cable networks and over 8,500 local cable companies. Provides a free cable connection and over 540 hours per month of commercial-free educational programming to schools.

Center for Commercial Free Education (http://www.commercialfree.org) Practical strategies for education activists who want to address the growing commercialism in education.

Center for Media Literacy (http://www.medialit.org) Provides workshops and a catalog of useful media-literacy kits, books, and resources for the classroom and community.

Children Now (http://www.childrennow.org/media) The latest study from this research group is "Boys to Men: Media Messages About Masculinity." Previous studies include "A Different World: Children's Perspectives on Race and Class in the Media."

Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (http://www.fair.org) A national media watch group that offers well-documented criticism of media bias and censorship. Publishes *Extra!*, a bimonthly magazine, and produces radio program CounterSpin. Excellent, searchable website.

HYPE: Monitoring the Black Image in the Media (http://pan.afrikan.net/hype/cover1.html) Sponsored by the Center on Blacks and the Media.

Media Awareness Network (http://www.media-awareness.ca/eng) One of the largest sites on this subject. Based in Canada, where media literacy is federally mandated for public schools.

Media Education Foundation (http://www.mediaed.org) Produces award-winning, highly critical, high school and college level videos featuring media scholars like Jean Kilbourne, Noam Chomsky, bell hooks, and Naomi Wolf.

Media Literacy Online Project, University of Oregon (http://interact.uoregon.edu/MediaLit/HomePage) Includes articles by leading media literacy educators and advocates.

Media-L listserv An online network in which educator and activists exchange ideas and share resources. To subscribe, send an e-mail message to: listproc@nmsu.edu. Leave the subject line blank. In the message itself, put a line like the following one (do not include parentheses and be sure your message is only one line): subscribe Media (your name), (title), (organization)

New Mexico Media Literacy Project (http://www.nmmlp.org) Sponsored by the only district-wide, K–12, media literacy program in the U.S. The project has produced an excelled CD-ROM introducing the basics of critical media literacy.

PBS Online (http://www.pbs.org) Provides lesson plans centered around many of its programs that focus on media's role in society.

—Bakari Chavanu

Reprinted from Rethinking Schools (Winter 1999–2000). Visit the Rethinking Schools Web site at www.rethinkingschool.com

TEACHER TALK

Teaching Film and Media

Does anyone on this list have any clever ideas on how to teach film? I have a group of twelfth-graders whom I would like to expose to film as an art form. I want to teach them things like the use of the camera, setting, and lighting. Anything would be helpful.

Michael Fisher
fisher79@hotmail.com

When I taught Media two years ago, I did the following. However, if you're just doing a unit in your classes, you can shorten it considerably.

One of the best ways I know of covering such content is to show music videos that have a story. Since they're usually only 3 to 5 minutes long, it's easy to see them again and again. I've used the following: "Jeremy" by Pearl Jam; "Fancy" by Reba McEntire; "Papa Don't Preach" by Madonna (warning: skimpy clothing); "Oh Father" by Madonna; "How Can I Help You Say Good-bye" by Patty Loveless; "Little Rock" by Colin Raye; "Independence Day" by Martina McBride; and "Lightning Crashes" by Live.

After my introduction, I have students record similar videos with a story and share an analysis with the class. Students have done this project independently and in groups or pairs. After this, I move to a television series that makes good use of technique. I often think that SPORTS NIGHT is technically appealing.

Finally, I move them into film shorts and then into the major film productions. Films I've shown include: METROPOLIS (I think it's always a good idea to see a silent film); CITIZEN KANE; CASABLANCA; REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE; ALL ABOUT EVE; FAIL-SAFE; AMADEUS.

I hope this helps. I love trying to teach film; one of my books has a quote that I find helpful when I get discouraged about teaching film: "A film is difficult to explain because it's so easy to understand."

Books that might be helpful: READING THE MOVIES; THE ELEMENTS OF WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE AND FILM; CRITICAL APPROACHES TO WRITING ABOUT FILM; UNDERSTANDING THE FILM; UNDERSTANDING MOVIES; FLASHBACK; A BRIEF HISTORY OF FILM; FILM ART: AN INTRODUCTION; CINEMA FOR BEGINNERS; A HISTORY OF FILM; A SHORT HISTORY OF THE MOVIES.

Steven A. Estep
stastep@hotmail.com

Ideas: Take a film you wish to study and discuss the length of one or more scenes. Length of scenes vary, but if you want an example: If you saw SIXTH SENSE, there's a scene which begins when the Bruce Willis character visits the boy (in the hospital, I think) and the boy begins discussing his problem and ends when the setting changes. Any movie would do—SIXTH SENSE is just an example.

Help your students understand that music choices and angle choices are a few things (of many) the director intentionally uses to get his points across.

Music—diagetic (environmental sounds that all characters can hear) and non-diagetic (sounds that only the movie audience can hear).

Music is intentionally placed into the film to elicit a reaction that the director wants from the audience. Discuss what these effects are (people cry at movies—not so much with the images, but with the music the director added.)

You can talk about camera angles and the effects different angles have on the audience.

You can have students dissect a scene or two from a film or apply aspects of film to a video that you would like to see. Classic films (not the teenage variety) work much better. The better directors have better techniques.

One project that I plan to do with my literature class that deals with film is to separate them into groups. Each group reads a book of their own choosing, analyzes, and discusses the book a bit for plot and then takes a scene from the book to translate it into a movie using storyboards and video. They are not to "copy" another book that has been translated into a movie—it has to be an original treatment. It works rather well.

Paul Becker
beckerp@brevard.k12.fl.us

You've gotten some pretty good responses here. I have a few specific exercises I use with a range of students and with teachers. I adapt the exercises to fit the age group and interests. They are described in an article in the "learning" section of the Center for Media Literacy web site. The article is titled "Video Basics and Production Projects for the Classroom." You can find it by going directly to http://www.medialit.org/ReadingRoom/keyarticles/videobasics.html.

The ideas are pretty basic. Once students have some mastery of the equipment and you are examining ideas along with the gear, you will have to go much deeper. I love some of the work being done around the country with

▶

students using video to examine their own communities or families or to talk about issues of significance to them.

Will you have access to editing equipment? It is so (relatively) inexpensive these days and the quality is excellent.

It is only a half-truth to say that movies are a visual medium. In reality we are often moved as much by the sound—music, effects, dialog, and ambience—as by the picture. In the best movies, sight and sound work together seamlessly to communicate, transport, and involve us.

I just found a terrific resource for sound. The web page is http://www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/7689/sound.html. I found it by exploring a series of excellent articles written by directors and sound mixers at another web site. The articles are at http://filmsound.org.

Andy Garrison
agarrison@mail.utexas.edu

PREVIEWS

The following articles on using film in the classroom are available in their entirety on the CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS Web site. Both appeared originally in the Spring 2000 issue of CALIFORNIA ENGLISH, the journal of the California Association of Teachers of English.

After Viewing: Reflections on Responding to Films in the Classroom

by Bill Martin

For the most part teachers don't really take film seriously. . . . Not that film shouldn't be entertaining, [but] if we bring movies into the classroom, then we should make that time valuable and reflect on what value it has had and use it to make similar experiences outside of school just as valuable.

I have been teaching a Visual Media elective for several years, so this is a concern I have been unable to avoid. I'm not a film scholar so I have always said that Visual Media is a "Film Literature" course. We study film as literature.

Some years I have tried to put more emphasis on the nature of film as film. One year I used Bordwell's FILM ART. Another year I read aloud Sidney Lumet's MAKING MOVIES chapter by chapter, I have used Giannetti's UNDERSTANDING MOVIES and many many articles of film criticism.

The trouble with a film study approach is that it leads to a course in terminology. The error is the same as the error of teaching a literature course as a course in literary terminology; most students are not going to become film critics or English majors and their future experience of literature or of film will be improved, not by terminology, but by talk. Lists of terms and definitions give us something to teach, but it is not what we should teach. It is not what students really need.

I have returned to this over and over: the best objective for this course is to learn how to talk about movies. . . . .

Talking about experience is not an easy thing. And maybe not a necessary thing. But it is always a good thing and a beneficial thing. Any shared experience is a chance for a parallel experience of shared talk. This is the way I would like students to think of film: a chance for good talk. . . .

Viewing the Films: Not "Whether or Not," but "How?"

by William McCauley

Once upon a time it may have been logical to question the validity of showing filmed versions of literary classics. In this day of video, film, and television input, that question seems strained, to put it kindly. Films are a very real part of our students' lives, and English teachers have both an obligation and an opportunity to help students see filmed versions of literary texts for what they are: another interpretation of a written text.

Teachers who worry that showing the films will somehow undermine the works themselves are approaching the process from the wrong direction. Clearly it is counter-productive to tell students that they are now going to see "the film" of the book. This kind of approach validates the film before the opening credits begin to roll, and it turns the students into passive viewers. Our goal should be to turn them into critical observers. Their goal should be to interpret the film, to note the ways in which directors and actors have brought the text to the screen—in short, to "read" the film. This not only allows the students to practice the skills they have mastered in analyzing literary texts, but it also prepares them for a more critical analysis of other films, TV shows, and videos that they encounter outside of the classroom. . . .

Online Resources on Media Literacy

The following articles on media literacy are available as links from the *Classroom Notes Plus* web page at http://www.ncte.org/notesplus/. All of these originally appeared in NCTE's January 1998 *English Journal*.

"Media Literacy Does Work, Trust Me" by Ellen Krueger

"Teenagers Evaluating Modern Media" by James Brooks

"Teaching Television to Empower Students" by David B. Owen, Charles L. P. Silet, and Sarah E. Brown

"Media Literacy: A Guided Tour of Selected Resources for Teaching" by Elizabeth Thoman

"The Politics of Teleliteracy and Adbusting in the Classroom" by Marnie W. Curry-Tash

"The Simpsons Meet Mark Twain: Analyzing Popular Media Texts in the Classroom" by Renée Hobbs

NOTES

TV-Turnoff Week

On April 23–29, 2001, millions of people nationwide will voluntarily turn off their TV sets for a week and rediscover that life can be more constructive, rewarding, healthy, fun, and even informed, when they watch less TV. The Seventh Annual National TV-Turnoff Week is sponsored by the TV-Turnoff Network in order to encourage people to watch less TV and to promote healthy lifestyles and communities. To learn how you can be more involved, visit http://www.tvturnoff.org.

ATEG Web Site

The Assembly for the Teaching of English Grammar sponsors a Web site with resources, a message board, teaching tips, and grammar syllabi at http://www.ateg.org. Teachers can also join the lively ATEG listserv by sending an e-mail to listserv@listserv.muohio.edu; leave the subject line blank, don't add a signature, and type just this message: subscribe ATEG yourfirstname yourlastname. Contact ATEG President Brock Haussamen at bhaussam@raritanval.edu with any questions.

Correction

The following correction appeared in the Spring 2001 *Teaching Tolerance*. The article mentioned was reprinted in the January 2001 issue of *Classroom Notes Plus*.

In his essay "How We Are White" (Fall 2000), Gary Howard cited "the marchers who stood on the Edmund Pettus Bridge with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on that awful Sunday." In fact, Dr. King called for the March 7, 1965, protest but was not present in Selma, Ala., on "Bloody Sunday," when voting rights activists attempted to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge en route to Montgomery. The Selma activists, led by John Lewis and Hosea Williams, began the procession as planned, but state and local law enforcement attacked them at the bridge. Dr. King led a symbolic march to the bridge two days later, and on March 25, walked with 25,000 exhausted marchers to the steps of the capitol. The following August, President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Classroom Solutions

A Grading Tip

An organizational tip for anyone's classroom: Purchase one of those expandable letter-size folders that uses numbers or letters. Starting on day one, collect student work and place in the first folder. The next day, place the second day's papers in the second slot, etc. When you have time, reach in and pull out a day's worth of papers and grade them. I usually staple all the papers I collect at the beginning of the class. This lets me know who had the homework in on time. Other papers turned in that day are tucked in that stack.

Bob Leslie
bobo54@hotmail.com

CLASSROOM NOTES PLUS INDEX, 2000–2001

Classroom Management

Clothesline Display (Classroom Solutions), August 2000
The Thought Pot, Andrew R. West, August, 2000
Ten Things You Should Know About . . ., Sherri S. Hall, August 2000
Emergency Measures for Ugly Classrooms (Teacher Talk), August 2000
Express Yourself in Color, Susan Rae, August 2000
Custodians and Keys (Classroom Solutions), October 2000
Late-Work Tickets (Classroom Solutions), October 2000
Suggestions for Working with Students with Disabilities (Teacher Talk), October 2000
The Writing Checklist: An Easy Way to Review Grammar, Pamela J. Orth, October 2000
Not Just for Elementary Students, Tracy Felan, January 2001
Staying Refreshed (Teacher Talk), January 2001
How Do You Stay Refreshed? (Teacher Talk), April 2001
Language as Visual Aid: Using the Classroom Walls Differently, Chad A. Donohue, April 2001
A Grading Tip (Classroom Solutions), April 2001

Interdisciplinary

Classroom Consumers Report, Stacey Doolin, August 2000
Putting Rock and Roll into Writing, Cecelia A. Murphy, October 2000
Always Remember, Never Forget (Focus on Teaching about the Holocaust), January 2001
Clarifying Goals for Teaching the Holocaust (Teacher Talk), January 2001
A Silent Warm-Up, Robin Wolcott, January 2001
Correspondence in a Concentration Camp, Don Leibold, January 2001
Suggestions for Nonfiction Related to the Holocaust (Teacher Talk), January 2001
Web Links Related to the Holocaust (Web Resources), January 2001
A Hiding Place, Victoria Lewis, January 2001
Alternatives for Students Who Are Not Allowed to Watch *SCHINDLER'S LIST* (Teacher Talk), January 2001
Confronting Prejudice and Genocide: Using Symbols and Stories in Holocaust Education, Nancy D. Kersell, January 2001
Recommended Books for Teaching about the Holocaust, January 2001
Helping Students Reach Beyond Their Immediate Worlds, January 2001

Language Exploration

Language Lessons for Critical Thinking, Joe Taylor, August 2000
Exploring Gender Assumptions in Language, Terry Martin, August 2000
Tabloid Vocabulary (Classroom Solutions), August 2000
Figurative Language (Focus on Literary Terms), Brian Moon, August 2000
Language as Visual Aid: Using the Classroom Walls Differently, Chad A. Donohue, April 2001

Literature

Be-Bop-Bo-Duh: Writing Jazz Poetry (Focus on the Harlem Renaissance), Aurelia Lucia Henriquez, August 2000
Exploring the Harlem Renaissance (Teacher Talk), August 2000
Harlem Renaissance Web Sites (Web Resources), August 2000
Online Interviews with Authors (Web Resources), August 2000
The Granddaughter Project, Kay Hinkebein, October 2000
Ten Ways to Play with Literature (Traci's Lists of Ten), Traci Gardner, October 2000
WebQuests (Web Resources), October, 2000
Connecting Songs and Stories, Terri Fisher-Reed, April 2001

Media/Film

Online Screenplays (Web Resources), August 2000
Classroom Consumers Report, Stacey Doolin, August 2000
Turning the Camera on the Class, Alice Cross, April 2001
What Is Media Literacy? (Focus on Media Literacy), Andrew Garrison, April 2001
Web Sites on Media Literacy and Advertising, Bakari Chavanu, April 2001
Ten Television Analysis Writing Projects (Traci's Lists of Ten), Traci Gardner, April 2001
Teaching Film and Media (Teacher Talk), April 2001

Multicultural Education

Be-Bop-Bo-Duh: Writing Jazz Poetry (Focus on the Harlem Renaissance), Aurelia Lucia Henriquez, August 2000
Exploring the Harlem Renaissance (Teacher Talk), August 2000

►

Harlem Renaissance Web Sites (Web Resources), August 2000

Alice Walker: Living by the Word (Excerpt), August 2000

Deepening the Meaning of Heritage Months (Focus on Multicultural Education), Deborah J. Menkart, October 2000

A Teacher Shares the Meaning of Martin Luther King Jr. Day with Her Students, Jessyca Pearson Yucas, January 2001

How We Are White (Focus on Multicultural Education), Gary Howard, January 2001

Web Sites Related to the Life and Work of Martin Luther King Jr., January 2001

A Moral Choice (Focus on Multicultural Education), Joyce E. King, April 2001

Personal and Interpersonal Exploration

The Granddaughter Project, Kay Hinkebein, October 2000

Family Stories: The "Telling" Connection between School and Home, Rose Reissman, January 2001

Showing Who We Are through a Class Quilt (Classroom Solutions), January 2001

Poetry

Alice Walker: Living by the Word (Excerpt), August 2000

Seeing Is Reading: "The Hollow Men," James Penha, August 2000

Exploring Gender Assumptions in Language, Terry Martin, August 2000

Their Day to "Howl": Ginsberg Brings Out the Poetic Best in Middle School Students, Alfree Enciso, October 2000

Imitating the British Romantic Poets, Micheal T. Duni, April 2001

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (Teacher Talk), April 2001

Dead Poet Interviews, Colette Marie Bennett, April 2001

Paste-Pot Poetry, Mary Ann Yedinak, April 2001

Public Speaking/Presentation

Stage Fright (Classroom Solutions), August 2000

Combating Stage Fright, Linda S. Beath, January 2001

Family Stories: The "Telling" Connection between School and Home, Rose Reissman, January 2001

Reading

Do You Ask High School Students to Read Aloud? (Teacher Talk), August 2000

The Literacy Club: A "Free Reading" Project, Tory Babcock, January 2001

Practicing Practical Reading, Frances B. Carter, January 2001

Technology and the Internet

Getting the Move On: Revision in the Computer Lab, Jim Lonergan and Donna-Marie Stupple, October 2000

WebQuests (Web Resources), October, 2000

Webfolios (Teacher Talk), April 2001

Student Web Publishing Resources (Web Resources), April 2001

Writing

The Thought Pot, Andrew R. West, August 2000

Express Yourself in Color, Susan Rae, August 2000

Ten Things You Should Know About . . ., Sherri S. Hall, August 2000

Ten Prewriting Exercises for Personal Narratives (Traci's Lists of Ten), Traci Gardner, August 2000

Putting Rock and Roll into Writing, Cecelia A. Murphy, October 2000

Getting the Move On: Revision in the Computer Lab, Jim Lonergan and Donna-Marie Stupple, October 2000

How Do You Help Students Recognize Style and Voice? (Teacher Talk), October 2000

The Writing Checklist: An Easy Way to Review Grammar, Pamela J. Orth, October 2000

Blithering Titles, Sue Torsberg, January 2001

Finding Stories in Paintings, Doris Brewton, April 2001

Connecting Songs and Stories, Terri Fisher-Reed, April 2001

American Writers: A Journey through History

C-SPAN is looking at the lives and works of American writers through an upcoming television series titled American Writers: A Journey through History.

The commercial-free, copyright-cleared programming is available for use in the classroom. For teaching guides and classroom posters, join C-SPAN in the Classroom online at http://www.c-span.org/classroom.

The following American writers are featured this spring and summer:

April 2, Thomas Paine
April 9, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison
April 16, Lewis and Clark
April 23, James Fenimore Cooper
April 30, Sojourner Truth

May 7, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau
May 14, Elizabeth Cady Stanton
May 21, Nathaniel Hawthorne
May 28, Frederick Douglass

June 4, Harriet Beecher Stowe
June 11, Mary Chesnut
June 18, Abraham Lincoln
June 25, Mark Twain

July 2, Willa Cather
July 9, Black Elk
July 16, Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois
July 23, Henry Adams
July 30, Edith Wharton

August 6, Upton Sinclair
August 13, Theodore Roosevelt
August 20, Theodore Dreiser

The programs are scheduled to air live on Mondays at 9 a.m. (Eastern Time) and replay Fridays at 8 p.m. The series will run through December 2001.

For more information, visit http://www.c-span.org/classroom and http://www.americanwriters.org.

INVIGORATE YOUR TEACHING

Use an NCTE Plus Membership to put a fresh spark into your teaching. Every Plus Membership includes:

- Voting membership in the NCTE Secondary Section.
- A subscription to the NCTE newspaper, *The Council Chronicle*.
- A subscription to *Classroom Notes Plus*, a quarterly publication of practical teaching ideas contributed by teachers across the country. Each issue is packed with dozens of immediately usable ideas (published January, April, August, and October).
- *Ideas Plus*, an annual book of classroom ideas and exercises covering the teaching of composition, literature, and language. *Ideas Plus* provides a ready reserve of teaching ideas—ones you can use with existing lessons. In addition, it will help in creating new units and reviving old ones.

Become an NCTE Plus member for only $45 per year. Or, if you are already an NCTE member, add Plus to your membership for only $15 per year. (NCTE Plus will run concurrently with your existing membership.)

☐ **YES**, I'd like to join NCTE and become an NCTE Plus member today. $45.00

☐ **YES**, I am already an NCTE member, and I would like to add NCTE Plus to my existing membership. $15.00

Your current membership number: ____________

Name ____________

Address ____________

City ________ State ______ Zip ______

Phone: Home ________ Office ________

☐ Remittance enclosed.
(Make your check payable to NCTE.)

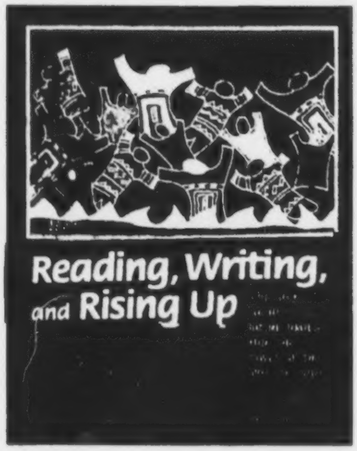
☐ Charge my VISA or MasterCard.
Account Number ____/____/____/____
Exp. Date ____/____

☐ Bill me. ____________
(Your signature) P-3125

YOU MAY ALSO CALL 1-877-369-6283
OR GO ONLINE AT
WWW.NCTE.ORG/MEMBER/ENROLL.FORM.SHTML

Reading, Writing, and Rising Up

Teaching About Social Justice and the Power of the Written Word



Reading, Writing, and Rising Up

"My students walk out the school door into a social emergency," writes author Linda Christensen. "I believe that writing is a basic skill that will help them both understand that emergency and work to change it." This practical, inspirational book offers essays, lesson plans, and a remarkable collection of student writing, all in an unwavering focus on language arts teaching for justice.

$12.95

2 or more copies: Only $10/each!

Plus shipping and handling

US shipping and handling costs are 10% of the total.
Minimum S&H charge of $3.50.

Paperback • 196 pp. • ISBN 0-942961-25-0

Rethinking Schools
1001 E. Keefe Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53212
414-964-9646 • FAX: 414-964-7220

CALL TOLL-FREE:
1-800-669-4192
ORDER ONLINE:
www.rethinkingschools.org

TEACHING
POETRY

AN INNOVATIVE CONFERENCE
FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH
July 18 to 21, 2001
Sonoma Country Day School
IN THE HEART OF
CALIFORNIA'S WINE COUNTRY

Keynote Speaker: **X. J. Kennedy**
poet, children's author and best-selling anthologist

Additional faculty includes

Dana Gioia
poet, critic, author of *Can Poetry Matter?*

Kay Ryan
New Yorker poet, author of *Say Uncle*

David Mason
poet, anthologist, author of *The Life of Poetry*

R. S. Gwynn
poet, editor of the *Penguin Pocket Anthology of Poetry*

Diane Thiel
prize-winning poet, author of *Writing Your Rhythm*

MORE INFORMATION
Visit our Website at **www.teachingpoetry.org**
or phone Conference Coordinator Susan Nix at
(707) 284-3209.
Conference brochure mailed in March.

PORTLAND
2002

Spring Conference 2002:

Call for Program Proposals

Proposal Due Date: May 14, 2001

With the theme *Changing Landscapes: Explorando Fronteras Nuevas*, NCTE invites you to submit a proposal for Spring Conference 2002 in Portland, Oregon, March 7–9, 2002.

Proposals are due May 14, 2001, and candidates will be notified of decisions in the fall of 2001. Invited participants must register for the Conference.

To receive a proposal form, call 800-369-6283, ext. 3849 or 877-369-6283, ext. 3849.

Also visit our Web site at www.ncte.org.

NCTE

New from NCTE

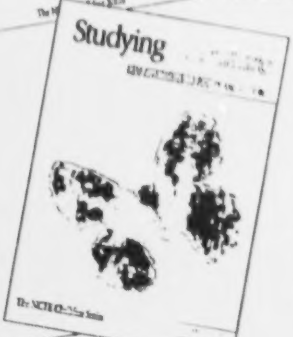
Reading Stories

Activities and Tools for Critical Readings

Bronwyn Mellor, Marnie O'Neill, and Annette Patterson

The five chapters in *Reading Stories* begin with what students know about stories and then move through crucial topics such as readers' expectations; authors' intentions; how and why readings change; reading in terms of gender, race, and class; and what is at stake in disagreements about readings. These and other issues are brought into sharp relief by consideration of 11 short stories—included in the book and selected for their appeal to students—by a range of authors. These stories form the basis of concrete activities for talk and writing in which students work to think critically about the content and implications of what they read—and to consider issues that, until now, they may have taken for granted. *The NCTE Chalkface Series. 136 pp. 2000. Grades 9–12. ISBN 0-8141-3911-6.*

No. 39116-3125 $16.95 ($12.95)



Studying Literature

New Approaches to Poetry and Fiction

Brian Moon

Studying Literature provides a powerful way for high school teachers and students to explore the question of what makes a piece of writing "literature." The book includes a variety of literary texts, along with accessible discussions and stimulating exercises to help students investigate the values, assumptions, and practices that underlie literary activity. Individual and group activities are based on poems, short stories, and prose extracts—all included in the book. *The NCTE Chalkface Series. 94 pp. 2000. Grades 9–12. ISBN 0-8141-4871-9.*

No. 48719-3125 $16.95 ($12.95)

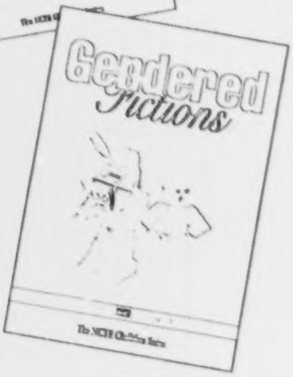
Reading Fictions

Applying Literary Theory to Short Stories

Bronwyn Mellor, Annette Patterson, and Marnie O'Neill

Reading Fictions uses text-based discussion and activities to help students explore the notion that a text does not simply "have" a definitive meaning but invites readers to construct meanings from a range of possibilities. Each chapter begins with an overview of key concepts and moves on to stories—reprinted in the book—by authors including Joyce Carol Oates, Richard Brautigan, and Bessie Head. *Approx. 100 pp. 2000. Grades 9–12. ISBN 0-8141-3869-1.*

No. 38691-3125 $16.95 ($12.95)



Gendered Fictions

Wayne Martino with Bronwyn Mellor

Gendered Fictions helps students explore how fiction and nonfiction texts construct gender by encouraging readers to take up "gendered" reading positions that support or challenge particular versions of masculinity and femininity. Thirteen texts for analysis—from authors including Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Toni Cade Bambara—are reprinted in the book. *Approx. 100 pp. 2000. Grades 9–12. ISBN 0-8141-1825-9.*

No. 18259-3125 $16.95 ($12.95)

NCTE

To order, call NCTE toll-free at
1-877-369-6283 or fax 217-328-9645.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

ERIC
Educational Resources Information Center

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

☒ This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

☐ This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").

EFF-089 (1/2003)